

A SHORT LIFE OF

by
ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE

ABRIDGED

GARDEN CITY

NEW YORK

1928

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. JOHN AND JANE CLEMENS	1
II. A LOWLY BIRTHPLACE	4
III. A PRIMITIVE CHILDHOOD—HANNIBAL SCHOOL	6
IV. THE REAL TOM SAWYER	14
V. DEATH OF JOHN CLEMENS—SAM CLEMENS, PRINTER'S APPRENTICE	23
VI. LITERARY BEGINNINGS	28
VII. A JOURNEY IN THE WORLD	31
VIII. KEOKUK—CINCINNATI—THE RIVER	36
IX. THE CUB PILOT	44
X. PILOT SAMUEL CLEMENS—THE SOLDIER	53
XI. THE PIONEER	62
XII. A COMSTOCK JOURNALIST—MARK TWAIN	71
XIII. ARTEMUS WARD—A SPEECH	78
XIV. AT THE GOLDEN GATE—MINING AGAIN— THE JUMPING FROG—HAWAII	83
XV. MARK TWAIN, LECTURER—THE ROAD HOME	96
XVI. AN "INNOCENT" ABROAD	106

	PAGE
XVII. A VISIT TO ELMIRA	113
XVIII. A NEW BOOK, A NEW PAPER, AND A WEDDING	118
XIX. THE YEAR AT BUFFALO—THE NEW BOOK—QUARRY FARM	123
XX. A TRIP TO ENGLAND—THE GILDED AGE	129
XXI. BACK IN LONDON AGAIN—TOM SAWYER —A NEW HOME	134
XXII. THE WALK TO BOSTON, AND “OLD TIMES ON THE MISSISSIPPI”—HUCK FINN	141
XXIII. AN ENTERTAINER AT HOME—TRAMPING WITH TWICHELL	148
XXIV. “THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER”— QUARRY FARM—GENERAL GRANT	155
XXV. MANY PROSPECTS—BACK TO THE RIVER —HUCK—READING WITH CABLE	162
XXVI. THE GRANT BOOK—MARK TWAIN AT FIFTY—THE MACHINE	174
XXVII. KIPLING COMES TO ELMIRA—THE “YANKEE” LEAVING AMERICA.	186
XXVIII. EUROPEAN WANDERINGS—JOAN OF ARC —THE BUSINESS YOKE	191
XXIX. MR. ROGERS—END OF BUSINESS—JOAN —AROUND THE WORLD	202
XXX. THE PASSING OF SUSY—LONDON—PAY- ING THE DEBTS	210

XXXI.	SOCIAL VIENNA, AND HOME	218
XXXII.	"THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE" . . .	226
XXXIII.	LAST SUMMER AT ELMIRA—THE PASS- ING OF OLIVIA CLEMENS	232
XXXIV.	REMAKING A HOME—AT PIER 70 . . .	238
XXXV.	MARK TWAIN ARRANGES FOR HIS BIOGRAPHY	243
XXXVI.	MONADNOCK—BILLIARDS—WASHING- TON—THE OXFORD DEGREE . . .	255
XXXVII.	THE NEW HOME—A WARNING . . .	271
XXXVIII.	THE DEATH OF JEAN	280
XXXIX.	THE RETURN TO BERMUDA, AND HOME	285
XL.	THE ENVIED ESTATE	292
INDEX.	299

A SHORT LIFE OF
MARK TWAIN

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I

JOHN AND JANE CLEMENS

ON THE afternoon of a spring day in the year 1853, there appeared in the little village of Florida, Missouri, a family of six persons, arriving after a long journey from that dim region known as the Knobs of East Tennessee. They had followed a circuitous way, and had come in a manner of travel at present almost unknown. From their last home, a log cabin in the little settlement of Pall Mall on the banks of Wolf River, they had journeyed to the Ohio in a big, old-fashioned barouche, with the oldest boy, Orion, and Jennie, a slave girl, as outriders.

John Marshall Clemens and his wife, having put their dwindling fortunes behind them and burned their bridges, had come to make a new beginning in a new land. With the parents were four children: Orion, whose age was ten; Pamela, who was eight; Margaret, age five, and baby Benjamin, two years old. John Clemens had come of good Virginia stock and had been educated as lawyer, but his practice had not been successful, and of late years he had

engaged in a meager country commerce. Postmaster of Pall Mall, he was usually addressed as "Squire" or "Judge." His wife, who had been Jane Lampton, was of fine Kentucky family, a belle in her youth. They had never prospered, and had drifted from one small environment to another, always smaller and less encouraging. Relatives of Jane Lampton, most of them more prosperous, had settled in Missouri, and one of them, a brother-in-law named John Quarles, had written enthusiastically of the prospects. Another relative there was Cousin James Lampton, one day to be immortalized in fiction and drama as Colonel Mulberry Sellers, that lovely visionary of *The Gilded Age*. John Clemens was himself a dreamer, and even his more practical wife probably had no wish to oppose a move which might improve their fortunes and certainly could not damage them.

John Clemens was by no means a weak man, but he had somehow never been suited to conditions, and his health had been always uncertain. His standards of right and wrong had not weakened, but his business judgment was poor. Ten years of a losing fight had left him, at thirty-six, old for his years, out of tune with life, and nearly out of heart. Nor is it to be wondered at that the features of Jane Clemens had grown sharper and her manner graver as the years passed. So it came about that these two had determined to make a new start in the world. They had sold what they could sell and put what they could carry into the big barouche, a relic of their earlier fortunes, leaving behind them only a great

tract of land which John Clemens had acquired at a few cents an acre, believing that it would one day bring wealth to their children. This was the famous "Tennessee land," familiar to every reader of *The Gilded Age*.

II

A LOWLY BIRTHPLACE

THE little town of Florida, on the banks of the Salt River, was a village of about a score of houses, most of them tiny, one-story frame or log structures. It was almost as far from the world as an Indian settlement in the wilds of British Columbia would be to-day. The telegraph did not yet exist; the railroad, still a wonder of the East, had not ventured across the Alleghanies. The Mississippi River, the great thoroughfare of the West, and St. Louis with its boasted population of ten thousand, were reachable only after days of travel. Eastern Missouri had long been settled by slave-holding farmers, but it was remote, unenlightened, unprosperous—probably no great improvement upon the village among the Knobs of Tennessee.

Visionary John Clemens was surrounded by others of his kind—the Quarles and the Lampton stock. In fancy they saw the little Salt River with locks and dams made navigable to the Mississippi; they pictured Florida grown into a thriving inland port of trade. Clemens joined his brother-in-law in business, and turned a friendlier face to the future. He did not immediately build himself a home, but set up a few necessary belongings in a rented house, a humble

one-story affair, of a sort common to the South and West. The little house, old and weather-beaten now, has become a place of pilgrimage to those who find their way to that still inaccessible hamlet, for it was there on the 30th of November, 1835, that the child, one day to be called Mark Twain, made his feeble entrance into the world. It happened—and this will seem curious in the later event—that on the night of his arrival Halley's comet became visible in the sky. No one in Florida cared in the least for Halley's comet and few outside of the immediate family cared for a puny, seven-month infant with a wavering promise of life. It would have been no great sorrow, perhaps, if he had retired to the unknown as uncereimoniously as he came. Certainly no one dreamed that this little wailing thing would one day dazzle the hemispheres and be honored by sages and kings. His father may have looked upon him with favor, for he named him Samuel, after his own father, and added Langhorne for an old Virginia friend.

The family being now eight, including Jennie, the slave girl, found their three little rooms too small. John Clemens began the building of a new home, another one-story affair, but more commodious in its accommodations. It was completed in 1836, and in later years was sometimes mistakenly pointed out as the birthplace of Mark Twain.

III

A PRIMITIVE CHILDHOOD—HANNIBAL SCHOOL

THE new baby disappointed expectations. It lived through the winter, but it was a delicate child and hardly a satisfactory one. Once, in her old age, Jane Clemens said to the man who had become world famous:

"You gave me more uneasiness than any child I ever had."

"I suppose you were afraid I wouldn't live?" he suggested, thoughtfully.

She regarded him with the keen humor of her youth, which the years had never entirely conquered.

"No, afraid you would," she said. But that was only her joke, for she was the most tender-hearted creature in the world.

It was a curious childhood that little Sam Clemens had. All the children of that time and section played with the small negroes and were fond of them. From them they learned half-savage amusements and weird wonder tales, mainly concerned with ghosts and witches and strange conjury. The house had a great open fireplace where on winter evenings Jennie, the maid, and Uncle Ned, man of all work, told tales that would send their little hearers to bed shivering with fearful delight, frightened of their shadows.

Impressive things sometimes happened during the day. Once little Sam saw a runaway slave brought in by his six captors, who took him to an empty cabin, where they threw him on the floor and bound him with ropes. The memory of such a circumstance would last a lifetime.

John Clemens seldom devoted any time to the company of his children. He bought a book now and then, even a picture-book, but he did not join in their amusements, and rarely laughed. The problem of supplying food continued a somber one. Also, he was working on a perpetual-motion machine, which to the inventor at least was not a mirthful occupation. Jane Clemens was busy, too. Her native sense of humor survived, but it did not mellow with the years, and it was just as well to be fairly out of range when she was occupied with her employments.

The home of Uncle John Quarles was headquarters for the children. Uncle John was comparatively well-to-do, and his farm, his slaves, his great double log house were all sources of never-ending delight. Uncle John himself was a story teller and a man of laughter. To visit at his house was for a child to be in the midst of mirth and pranks continually. There was a halo about everything that Uncle John did, the radiance that goes with great kindness, the jovial gentle-heartedness of a humane man. Sometimes when the children came for eggs he would say:

"Your hens won't lay, eh? Tell your ma to feed 'em parched corn and drive 'em uphill," and this was always a master stroke of humor to his small hearers.

The partnership of this light-hearted optimist and the grave John Clemens did not long continue. At the end of two or three years the latter opened business for himself, with Orion Clemens, a pensive lad of about thirteen, as his assistant. Neither father nor son had any business ability and they acquired nothing but bad debts. The Clemens fortunes were again on the down grade. Another child, Henry, born in 1838, added a new burden. Then came sorrow. Little Margaret, nine years old, returned from school one day, dropped her books on the table, and lay down on her small bed. Her cheeks were flushed and she was soon burning with fever. She died about a week later. It was little Sam's first sight of death. This was in August, 1839, when he was not yet four years old.

John Clemens, now thoroughly sick of Florida, decided to do what a more logical reasoner would have done in the beginning: he concluded to go to a river where the boats were already running and to a city that was at least begun. He selected Hannibal, loaded his family and effects into wagons, and was soon on the way. He was never entirely without hope. He still owned the great tract of land in East Tennessee, and he believed that it would one day provide a fortune for his children. In dark moments he had been tempted to let it go at one small figure or another, but had never quite consented.

"We will struggle along somehow, Jane," he would say. "We will not throw away the children's fortune."

Hannibal on the Mississippi was a great improvement on Florida, in that it was larger, considerably more alive, and made at least a show of manufacturing. A slave town, it could hardly be lively, though it had its lively moments when steamboats to or from St. Louis touched the wharf and all the idlers along the river front awoke and collected around the landing stage, to watch operations, sometimes to assist in them. The little "white town drowsing in the sunshine" was handsomely situated. It was circled by bluffs and there was a fine hill to the northward, overlooking the river. In the midstream were islands, and beyond them the green, wooded shores of Illinois. Somewhat below town there was a most interesting cave, with stalactites and dark, unexplored passages. All of these things would gain celebrity, by and by, through what in that far day was the most unnoticed thing in Hannibal—a frail child of four, little Sam Clemens—an unimportant unit of a family that had found shelter in a part of a house on Hill Street, known as the Pavey Hotel. The cave would become Tom Sawyer's cave; the island, Tom Sawyer's island; Holliday's Hill would be remembered as his playground, and upon it would be placed a bronze statue looking out upon the river that would always be associated with the name of Mark Twain.

John Clemens moved a portion of his merchandise from Florida, and now established himself in a small way, with his son Orion in a new suit of clothes, as clerk. The new clothes stirred Orion's ambition for a

time, but business was slow and he was usually dreaming or reading, and customers were not well served. By his father's advice he presently became a printer's apprentice in the office of the *Hannibal Journal*. Orion Clemens was one of those gentle souls that all men love and few care to emulate. He had no tendency to bad habits or unworthy pursuits; indeed, no positive traits of any sort. Full of whims and fancies, unstable as water, he was swayed by every passing emotion. A life like his is bound to be a succession of extremes—alternate periods of supreme exaltation and despair.

Of the other children, Pamela, now twelve, and Benjamin, seven, were put to school. Henry was still a baby. Little Sam was the least promising of the flock. He remained delicate, and developed little beyond a tendency to mischief. He was queer and fanciful and would run away if not watched—always in the direction of the river. He walked in his sleep, and often the rest of the household got up to find him fretting with cold in some dark corner. He caught every disease that went about, and seemed always anxious to acquire new ones.

We have already told of the delight of the Clemens children in Uncle John Quarles's farm. To little Sam it was probably a life-saver. His mother generally took him back there a part of each summer, and with his small cousin Tabitha, his own age, he wandered over that magic domain. The farmhouse itself consisted of two buildings with a roofed-over passage between, where in summer the lavish Southern meals

were served, brought on in huge dishes by negroes.

There were plenty of diversions—horses to ride to and from the field, ox wagons to go jouncing in when they had dumped their heavy loads. Then in the evening the children went with the black woman for the cows, and little Sam, wild headed and impetuous, raced hither and thither in sudden ecstasies, venting his emotions in leaps and shrieks, followed by spasms of laughter as he lay rolling on the grass.

Through those far-off, warm, golden summer days Sam romped and dreamed and grew. His mother generally kept him there until the late fall, when the chilly evenings made the family gather around the wide, blazing fireplace. Sixty years later he wrote:

I can see the room yet with perfect clearness. I can see all its belongings, all its details; the family room of the house, with the trundle bed in one corner and the spinning-wheel in the other—a wheel whose rising and falling wail, heard from a distance, was the mournfulest of all sounds to me, and made me homesick and low-spirited, and filled my atmosphere with wandering spirits of the dead . . . the lazy cat spread out on the rough hearthstones, the drowsy dogs braced against the jambs, blinking; my aunt in one chimney corner and my uncle in the other, smoking his corn-cob pipe.

Truly those were golden days.

It was after little Sam's first summer at the farm that his school days began. He was now five, and his mother announced that she was going to pay somebody to take him off her hands for a part of each day. She declared it took all the rest of the family to watch him, to keep him from getting drowned.

A slave girl one day pulled him out of a deep hole in Bear Creek and brought him home in a limp, unpromising condition. When he was restored his mother said:

"I guess there wasn't much danger. People born to be hanged are safe in water."

Jane Clemens was the original of Aunt Polly in the story of Tom Sawyer—an outspoken, keen-witted, charitable woman. Little Sam was inclined to elaborate largely on fact. A neighbor once said to her:

"You don't believe anything that child says, I hope?"

She answered, placidly: "Oh, yes. I know his average. I discount him ninety per cent.; the rest is pure gold."

The school selected for little Sam was on Main Street, and kept by Mrs. E. Horr. Mrs. Horr received twenty-five cents a week for each pupil and opened her school with prayer; after which came a chapter from the Bible and the rules of conduct. Little Sam did not think much of the rules of conduct. He fractured them once or twice, and received a warning. It was not sufficient, and in the midst of some transgression he was suddenly ordered by Mrs. Horr to go out and bring a stick for his own correction. This was a solemn undertaking. He went outside and looked around, but could find nothing that seemed suitable. Even the smallest switches had a keen, disagreeable look.

Then Providence seemed to send an inspiration. There was a cooper shop across the street, with a

good many shavings outside; one of them had blown across and lay just in front of him. Sam picked it up and, entering the schoolroom, meekly handed it to Mrs. Horr. So far as known it is the first example of that humor which would one day win fame for the small culprit.

It was not an entire success. Mrs. Horr could not afford to be lax in her discipline; little Sam went home that night with a strong distaste for school, dreaming of a day when he would be a pirate or an Indian and scalp or drown such people as Mrs. Horr.

He went back to school, but he never learned to like it. When the days of early summer returned, when from his desk he could see the sunshine lighting the soft green of Holliday's Hill, with the glint of the river and the purple distance beyond, it seemed to him that to be shut up with a spelling book and a cross teacher was more than he could bear. Among the records preserved from that far-off time there remains a yellow slip whereon in neat, prim penmanship is written:

MISS PAMELA CLEMENS

Has won the love of her teachers and schoolmates by her amiable deportment and faithful application to her various studies.

E. HORR, *Teacher*.

Diligent search has failed to reveal any such testimonial for little Sam. He must have learned something, however, and was soon considered a good speller for his years.

IV

THE REAL TOM SAWYER

NOTHING more than temporary prosperity ever came to John Clemens. In Hannibal, he was obliged to part with Jennie, the slave girl, to provide the family with funds and to satisfy creditors.

This and similar transactions made a deep impression on a sensitive, imaginative little boy. There never was a fiercer abolitionist than Mark Twain.

Jennie brought a good price, and John Clemens's circumstances were easier for a time. Business improved and he became a property owner. But then came another crisis, a descent of the creditors who took everything, even to the cow, the household furniture, everything but the Tennessee land, which they probably considered worthless.

It was at this dark period that death came again to the Clemens household. Little Benjamin, the family favorite, an amiable lad of ten, one day sickened, and died within a week. Little Sam long remembered the picture of his parents' grief.

Judge Clemens went back to his law practice. They scraped together a few belongings and Mrs. Clemens took some boarders. Orion, by this time a journeyman printer, obtained a place in St. Louis and aided in the family support.

There came now another period of better times. Legal fees were larger and more frequent. Within another two years Judge Clemens appears to have been in favorable circumstances again—able, at least, to invest some money in silkworm culture, and lose it, and to build a modest house on Hill Street, the one known to-day as the Mark Twain home. This was in 1844, when little Sam was nine years old.

It was about this time that the boyhood of Samuel Clemens may be said to have begun—the Tom Sawyer days which would by and by be turned into classic reading for future generations. Heretofore, he had been just a child, wild and mischievous, but still a child—a delicate little lad to be worried over, mothered, or spanked and put to bed. Now at nine he had acquired health, with the ability to look out for himself, and a knowledge of the world considerably in advance of his years. The summers on the farm had provided the health; life in a river slave town had furnished the experience.

He had seen most of the round of life; there was little that he did not know. He had even seen men killed—a slave struck down with a piece of slag, a drunken Welshman shot by a woman defending her home, and an old man shot down on Main Street at noonday. Sam saw them carry the old man home, and, following with other boys, saw them lay him on a bed and spread on his breast an open family Bible which looked as heavy as an anvil. The little boy thought if he could only take that great load away the poor dying man would not breathe so heavily.

Education is acquired rapidly amid such happenings as these.

Sam did not regard them as matters of education. They terrified him and got into his dreams. He felt that it was his conscience that made those things torture him. That was his mother's idea, and he had a high respect for her moral opinions. He had once seen her defy a drunken Corsican who was pursuing his daughter with a rope's end. Anyone who could do that must have a perfect conscience, Sam thought. In the darkness he would say his prayers, especially when a thunderstorm was coming, and resolve upon an improved life. He detested Sunday school, and his brother Orion, who was religious, once threatened to drag him there by the collar. As the thunder got louder Sam decided that he loved Sunday school and would go next time without being invited.

Happily, there were pleasanter things and days. There was the cave with its marvels, and Bear Creek, where, after repeated accidents, he learned to swim, better than any boy in town of his age.

The mile-wide river that fronted the town gave him great happiness. Its steamboats with their brilliant life, its great, slow-moving rafts provided him with a dream world of his own.

"You can hardly imagine what it meant," he reflected, once, "to a boy shut in as we were, to see the steamboats pass up and down and never take a trip on them."

Mark Twain did not remember when he learned to smoke, but it was probably about this time.

Tobacco was in common use by all ages and both sexes. In the country districts boys, and even girls, walked to school smoking pipes. Sam picked up certain strong, expressive words, and said them sometimes, when Jane Clemens was out of hearing. He had a notion that she would skin him alive if she heard him swear. His education had doubtful spots in it, but it included caution.

He was not a particularly attractive lad. He was somewhat undersized and his head seemed too large for his body. His features were rather prominent; his great ruck of sandy hair he plastered down to keep from curling. He did not talk much and he spoke in a curious, drawling fashion, slow even for the South. Neither was he regarded as brilliant, yet, somehow, whenever Sam began to speak every playmate stopped to listen. The younger brother, Henry Clemens, was a lovable, obedient little fellow, whom the mischievous Sam took delight in teasing. Henry became the Sid of Tom Sawyer, though Henry was in every way a finer character than Sid. His brother Sam loved him and in the main was his faithful champion.

The home incidents in Tom Sawyer, most of them, really happened. Sam Clemens did clod Henry for getting him into trouble once when he came home from swimming; he did inveigle a lot of boys into whitewashing a fence for him; he did give Pain-killer to Peter the cat.

Tom Sawyer's boon companions were Joe Harper and Huckleberry Finn. These two in life were John

Briggs and Tom Blankenship. John Briggs was a lively, good-hearted boy and Tom Blankenship was the son of an indigent family, exactly as pictured in the story: a ruin of rags, a river rat—kind of heart and possessing the priceless boon of absolute freedom. He could come and go as he chose; he never had to ask permission; he never went to school; he could sleep anywhere. He was the envy of every boy in town for these reasons and because he knew everything concerning hunting and fishing and all manner of signs and hoodoo charms. Sam Clemens adopted him outright, and the home of the Blankenships, a poor barn of a place, was his favorite resort. The father, old drunken Ben Blankenship, never dreamed that pieces of his house would be carried off as relics because of the literary fame of his son, the immortal Huck of fiction. The boys had a set of signals, catcalls and the like, and many was the night that Sam Clemens, ten or eleven years old, would climb out of the window to the single-story roof, and down a little arbor and a flight of steps, to join his companions in some such excursion as those familiar to all readers of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. No orchard or melon patch was entirely safe from them; no rowboat was so securely tied or carefully concealed that they were not likely to borrow it when navigation was a part of their plan.

Their chief diversions were fishing and swimming. Often they breasted the resistless Mississippi current and swam entirely across to one of the islands,

where they frolicked for a time on the sand, then swam back, a good half mile each way.

If this unhallowed band had a leader, it was Sam Clemens. He was the youngest of the lot, but the others were always ready to follow his projects. He gloried in this, for, like Sawyer, he had a love of the spectacular that never wholly died. It seems almost a pity that in those far-off, barefoot days he could not have looked down the years and caught a glimpse of his splendid destiny.

His dreams were of another sort. He pictured himself as a pirate, a bandit, a steamboat pilot. Sam and his band played at being all of these things. The cave, two miles below town, was a valuable asset. As a pirate and bandit den it could not be surpassed. It was a real cave, with vaulted, spacious chambers and remote hiding places—everything that a romantic boy could love or long for. In the story of Tom Sawyer, Indian Joe dies in the cave. He did not die there in real life but once was lost there, and was living on bats when they found him. Joe in real life was about as pictured in the story, and when one night he did die, there came up a thunderstorm so terrific that Sam Clemens at home in bed was certain that Satan had come in person for the half-breed's wicked soul. He covered his head and said his prayers with fearful earnestness lest the evil one might conclude to save another trip by taking him along.

Tom Blankenship was the original of Huckleberry Finn, but his brother Ben, several years older, was

also drawn upon for that creation. Ben was not a pleasant character, yet somewhere within him was a strain of humanity that provided Mark Twain with an immortal episode—the sheltering of Nigger Jim.

A slave ran off from Monroe County, Missouri, and got across the river into Illinois. Ben used to fish and hunt over there in the swamps, and one day found him. It was considered a most worthy act in those days to return a runaway slave; in fact, it was a crime not to do it. Besides, there was for this one a reward of fifty dollars, a fortune to ragged Ben Blankenship. That money and the honor he could acquire must have been tempting to the waif, but it did not outweigh his human sympathy. Instead of giving the fugitive up and claiming the reward, Ben kept him over there in the marshes all summer. The negro fished and Ben carried him scraps of food. This by and by leaked out. Some woodchoppers went on a hunt for the fugitive and chased him to what is called Bird's Slough. There, trying to cross a drift, he was drowned.

Sam Clemens's associates were not all of the kind mentioned. At his school—now Mr. Cross's on the Square—there was George Robards, the Latin scholar, and his brother John; and Jimmie MacDaniel, whose company was worth while, for his father was a confectioner and Jimmie brought candy to school.

Furthermore, there were a good many girls, among them Mary Miller, who was nearly twice Sam's age and gave him his first broken heart.

"I believe I was as miserable as grown man could be," he said once, remembering.

But, like Tom Sawyer, Sam Clemens had one faithful sweetheart. They were one and the same. Becky Thatcher in the book was Laura Hawkins in reality. The Clemens and the Hawkins family were neighbors, and the children were playmates, Sam and Laura visited back and forth and found plenty of amusement. The boy could be tender and kind, and was always gentle in his treatment of the other sex. Once in a game of house building he accidentally let a brick fall on the little girl's finger. She wailed her sorrow, of course, but it is recorded that Sam cried much the louder and the longer of the two.

We are drifting away from the school days. They will not hold us long now. Mr. Cross's school stood about the center of the town. The Square was only a grove then, grown up with plum, hazel, and grapevines, a rare place for children. There was a spelling match every Friday afternoon, which was the only thing about school that Sam enjoyed. He could hold the floor at spelling and win compliments even from Mr. Cross, whose name must have been handed down by angels, it fitted him so well. One day Sam Clemens wrote on his slate:

Cross by name, and cross by nature.
Cross jumped over an Irish potato.

It was his first literary attempt and he exposed it to John Briggs, who admired it exceedingly. John

urged the author to write it on the board at noon, but the poet's ambition was more modest.

"Oh, pshaw!" said John. "I wouldn't be afraid to do it."

"I dare you to do it," said Sam.

John Briggs never took a dare, and when Mr. Cross returned from dinner Sam's fine couplet blazed at him from the blackboard. He turned, looked steadily at John Briggs; he had recognized the penmanship.

"Did you do that?" he asked, ominously.

It was a time for truth.

"Yes, sir," said John.

"Come here!"

Sam Clemens expected that the next call would be for "author," but perhaps Mr. Cross had used up his energy on John. Sam did not often escape. On the whole, he never learned to like school. He found it prison and servitude. His release was coming, sooner than he dreamed.

V

DEATH OF JOHN CLEMENS—SAM CLEMENS, PRINTER'S APPRENTICE

JOHN CLEMENS, who time and again had wrecked his fortunes by devices more or less unusual, now adopted the one unfailing method of achieving disaster. He indorsed a large note for a man of good repute, and the payment of it swept him clean.

There was one hope left. Judge Clemens was liked and respected in the community, and believed he could be elected as clerk of the surrogate court. He received the nomination and made a personal canvass on horseback, often riding through the rain and chill of autumn. He was elected, and it seemed now as if good days were at last about to come. At the end of February he rode to the county seat to be sworn in. Returning, he was drenched by a storm of rain and sleet, arriving at last, half frozen. Pneumonia followed, and in a few days it was known that his end was near. At moments he was cheerful and spoke of the wealth that lay in the Tennessee land. He said it would soon make them all rich and happy. Once he whispered, "Cling to the land—cling to the land, and wait."

Later he beckoned to Pamela, now a lovely girl of

nineteen, and, putting his arm about her neck, kissed her, for the first time in years.

"Let me die," he said.

He never spoke after that. A little more and the sad, weary life was ended. This was in March, 1847. John Clemens had lived less than forty-nine years. A dreamer and a moralist, an upright man honored by all, he had never been a financier.

The disaster to the Clemens household now seemed complete. The children were dazed. Sam in particular was overwhelmed with remorse. He remembered a hundred disobedient acts that never could be undone. Seeing his anguish his mother led him into the room where his father lay. She spoke a few comforting words and asked him to make her a promise. He flung himself into her arms.

"I will promise anything," he sobbed, "if you won't make me go to school—anything!"

His mother said, "No, Sammy, you need not go to school any more; only promise me to be a better boy; promise not to break my heart."

He promised her to be a faithful and upright man, like his father.

The funeral was followed by readjustments. Orion returned to St. Louis. His salary of ten dollars a week (good wages for those frugal days) permitted him to send three dollars weekly to the family. Pamela gave music lessons and contributed to the family fund. Pamela Clemens—the original of Cousin Mary in *Tom Sawyer*—was a sweet and noble girl.

It was agreed that Sam should become a printer.

He was apprenticed to a man named Ament, who had recently moved to Hannibal and bought the *Courier*. At twelve, Sam's school days were over.

The terms of Sam's apprenticeship were not very exciting, but they were not uncommon for that day; board and clothes—"more board than clothes, and not much of either," Mark Twain used to say. "I was supposed to get two suits of clothes a year, like a nigger, but I didn't get them. I got one suit and took the rest out in Ament's old garments, which didn't fit me in any noticeable way."

There was another apprentice, Wales McCormick, eighteen years old, and a giant. Ament's clothes were too small for Wales, but he had to wear them. The two apprentices fitted out with their employer's cast-off garments must have been a picturesque pair. Sam and Wales at first ate in the kitchen, but they made it so lively for the old slave cook and her mulatto daughter that they were promoted to the family table, where they sat with Mr. and Mrs. Ament and a journeyman printer, Pet McMurray, a happy soul, as one might suspect from his name.

One longs for a photograph of Sam Clemens at this period. Nothing of the sort remains; only a letter which, long years after, Pet McMurray wrote to Mark Twain:

If your memory extends so far back, you will recall a little sandy-haired boy of nearly a quarter of a century ago, in the printing-office at Hannibal, over the Brittingham drug store, mounted upon a little box at the case, pulling away at a huge cigar or a diminutive pipe, who used to love to sing so well the expression of the poor drunken man who was supposed to have

fallen by the wayside: "If ever I get up again, I'll stay up—if I kin." . . . Do you recollect any of the serious conflicts that mirth-loving brain of yours used to get you into with that diminutive creature Wales McCormick—how you used to call upon me to hold your cigar or pipe whilst you went entirely through him?

Sam became a favorite in the office, and its chief stand-by. Within the year he was a good typesetter and he could run a job press with precision and safety. Furthermore, he had charge of the circulation; which is to say he carried the papers. He was even a sort of editor. When the paper was about to go to press and there was not enough to fill the columns, he would go out and hunt up Ament and wait for the necessary copy.

The printer's boy, Sam Clemens, one afternoon on his way home, saw blown along the street a square bit of paper, a leaf from some book. He overtook the flying scrap and examined it. It was from an old history of Joan of Arc, and told of "the Maid" in the tower at Rouen, reviled and maltreated by her captors. Sam had never read any history, he had never heard of Joan of Arc, but now there stirred within him a powerful interest, and a feeling of deep indignation. He must know more of the tragic story.

The boy began to read. He hunted up whatever he could find about Joan; he became eager for French history in general. From the moment when that fluttering leaf was blown into his hands his career as one of the world's mentally elect was assured. Furthermore, his sympathy for Joan stirred his

natural hatred of all oppression and human injustice. He became the champion of the weak, the defender of the under dog.

Orion Clemens returned from St. Louis, and when a chance offered to buy the Hannibal *Journal* he succeeded in borrowing the necessary five hundred dollars and became its proprietor. He persuaded Sam, who by this time had been two years with Ament, to come into his employ. Henry Clemens at eleven was taken out of school to learn typesetting.

VI

LITERARY BEGINNINGS

ORION was not a good proprietor. He worked like a slave and did not spare the others. In his self-accusing way he afterward wrote:

I was tyrannical and unjust to Sam. He was clean and swift as a good journeyman. I gave him "takes," and if he got through well I begrudged him the time and made him work more.

The game was too desperate to be played tenderly. Sam complained of his hard lot. There were no more free afternoons.

The paper prospered for a time, and then Orion's strength and enthusiasm waned. When payments came due on his mortgage he could not meet them. When the need of money became great he made a trip to Tennessee, to try to raise something on the land.

It was at this point that Samuel Clemens's career as a journalist made its initial step. Orion left him in charge of the paper, and the boy concluded to liven up the circulation. The editor of a rival paper had been crossed in love and was said to have tried to drown himself. Sam wrote an article telling all about it. Then on the back of two big wooden letters used for bill printing he engraved illustrations.

The paper came out and the press had to be kept running steadily to supply the demand for it. Sam also wrote a poem at this time. It was entitled "To Mary in Hannibal." But perhaps he thought this title too long to be set in one column, so he omitted all the letters in "Hannibal" except the first and the last, and supplied their place with a long dash, with disturbing results. Orion returned and tried to make amends.

"I could have distanced all competitors, even then," he wrote later, "if I had recognized Sam's ability and let him go ahead, merely keeping him from offending worthy persons."

Sam sent two anecdotes to the *Saturday Evening Post*, then, as now, published in Philadelphia. They were accepted—without payment—and when they appeared he felt that he had entered among the elect. He was sixteen at the time.

He seems to have been satisfied with his distinction, for he sent nothing further to the *Post*. Now and then he did something for the *Journal*—something not likely to invite trouble.

Orion became despondent; one night a cow got into his printing office, upset a type case, and ate up two composition rollers. The world seemed all against him.

Another disaster quickly followed. A fire broke out and his loss was considerable. With the insurance money he replaced such articles as were absolutely needed and removed his plant into the front room of the Clemens dwelling. Here for another two years

the dying paper managed to drag along. Meantime Pamela Clemens had the good fortune to marry. Her husband was William A. Moffet, a well-to-do merchant of St. Louis.

Orion's circumstances did not improve. He noticed that even his mother no longer read his editorials; this was a final blow.

"I sat down in the dark," he writes, reminiscently, "the moon glinting in at the open door. I sat with one leg over the chair and let my mind float."

As a result of this moonlight excursion Orion sold the paper, on an offer that would just cover the amount of the mortgage. A little later he left Hannibal and located in Iowa.

VII

A JOURNEY IN THE WORLD

HIS brother was no longer with him. Several months earlier, June, 1853, Sam had decided to go adventuring on his own account. He confided his plan to his mother. He had decided to go to St. Louis, he said, where Pamela was. He meant to go farther than St. Louis, but he dared not tell her. Jane Clemens put together his few belongings, then she gravely held up a little Testament.

"I want you to take hold of the other end of this, Sam," she said, "and make me a promise."

That was a striking picture: the slim, wiry woman of forty-nine, her figure as straight as her deportment, facing the fair-cheeked, auburn-haired youth, his eyes as piercing and unwavering as her own.

"I want you to repeat after me, Sam, these words," Jane Clemens said. "I do solemnly swear that I will not throw a card or drink a drop of liquor while I am gone."

He repeated the oath after her, and she kissed him.

"And so," Orion records, "he went wandering in search of that comfort and that advancement and those rewards of industry which he had failed to find where I was—gloomy, taciturn, and selfish. I

not only missed his labor; we all missed his bounding activity and merriment."

Sam went to St. Louis by the night boat, visited his sister Pamela, and was presently setting type on the *Evening News*. When he had earned enough to pay his fare to New York City he set out for the metropolis, where there was a Crystal Palace exposition that he wished to see. He had never traveled on the train before, and the several days and nights of the journey were a wonderful experience.

He found New York a vast place, dazzling in size and splendor. The exposition building, a good way out, was where Bryant Park is now. Sam Clemens regarded it as one of the wonders of the world. A portion of a letter to his sister, his earliest preserved writing, follows:

From the gallery (second floor) you have a glorious sight—the flags of the different countries represented, the lofty dome, glittering jewelry, gaudy tapestry, etc., with the busy crowd passing to and fro—'tis a perfect fairy palace—beautiful beyond description . . .

The Latting Observatory (height about 280 feet) is near the Palace—from it you can obtain a grand view of the city and the country around. The Croton Aqueduct, to supply the city with water, is the greatest wonder yet. Four times every day I walk a little over a mile; and working hard all day, and walking four miles is exercise. I am used to it now, though, and it is no trouble. Where is Orion going to? Tell Ma my promises are faithfully kept; and if I have my health, I will take her to Ky. in the Spring—I shall save money for this. . . .

(It has just struck 2 A. M. and I always get up at 6 and am at work at 7.)

You ask me where I spend my evenings. Where would you suppose, with a free printer's library containing more than

4000 volumes within a quarter of a mile of me, and nobody at home to talk to? Write soon.

Truly your brother.

SAM.

There is nothing in this letter to suggest the literary man of a dozen or so years later. It is a letter that any boy of his years and opportunities might have written—a boy interested in the world's progress and concerned with the welfare of his home.

The work he had secured was in Cliff Street, in the printing establishment of John A. Gray & Green, who paid him four dollars a week, in depreciated, wildcat currency. He lodged at a mechanics' boarding house in Duane Street, and when he had paid his board and washing he sometimes had as much as fifty cents to lay away.

He did not care much for the board; he wrote that New Yorkers did not live as well as the people of the South. They ate "light bread," which they allowed to get stale, and seemed to prefer it that way. He had been used to the hot biscuits of the South. He did not find New York especially attractive when he had seen its wonders. But he did not find it easy to go elsewhere. In October he wrote to Pamela:

I have not written to any of the family for some time . . . because I have been fooling myself with the idea that I was going to leave New York every day for the last two weeks. I've taken a liking to the abominable place, and every time I get ready to leave I put it off a day or so.

Here is the first hint of the man of later years. "I have been fooling myself with the idea," is a phrase

with a distinct Mark Twain flavor. It was soon after this that we find Sam Clemens in Philadelphia "subbing" on the *Inquirer*. He was a fairly swift compositor and his earnings were considerably more than they had been in New York. Furthermore, they were paid in gold; he was able now and then to send something to his mother—small amounts, but welcome, no doubt. In a letter written in December he mentions Orion, who by this time had bought a paper in Muscatine, Iowa, and established the family there. Orion seems to have realized that his brother might be a valuable contributor, for the letter says:

I will try to write for the paper occasionally, but I fear my letter will be very uninteresting, for this incessant nightwork dulls one's ideas amazingly.

In some of the letters to Pamela there are indications of homesickness. He resents any thought that he is discouraged or downhearted, a pretty sure sign. In one place he says, "I would like amazingly to see a good old-fashioned negro." And again, "One only has to leave home to learn how to write letters to an absent friend." And he adds, "I don't like our present prospect for cold weather at all."

It was late in the summer of 1854 when he set out on his return to the West. He used to say that he sat up three days and nights in a smoking car on that journey. He saw Pamela for a few hours in St. Louis, then caught the Keokuk packet boat and, flinging himself into a berth, slept the clock three times round, only waking at last at Muscatine. It

was very early when he arrived, too early to rouse the family. In the small hotel where he waited for morning he found on the writing table a little well-worn book. It contained pictures of the English sovereigns, with the brief facts of their reigns. The young man entertained himself learning these items by heart. In an hour or two he had those details memorized, and he never forgot them. It became his groundwork for all English history.

VIII

KEOKUK—CINCINNATI—THE RIVER

ORION wished his brother to remain in Muscatine, but Sam had grave doubts as to financial prospects there, and returned to his old place on the St. Louis *Evening News*.

Orion Clemens presently married and removed to Keokuk, the home of his wife's parents. He opened a job-printing office and seemed to have fair prospects. His brother Sam came up for a visit, and received an offer of five dollars a week and board to remain. He decided to accept. Henry Clemens, now seventeen, and a lad named Dick Hingham were the assistants.

They were a lively lot. A music teacher with a class on the floor below objected to some of their evening diversions. He protested furiously, which was a mistake. The riot grew and added improvements. Then the poor professor tried gentleness, with entire success. He not only made friends of the young men, but added them to his singing class.

Sam Clemens was never much of a musician, but he had a pretty good voice in those days and could drum on the piano and guitar. He was easily the most popular member of the group. They liked his frank nature, his humor, his slow, quaint fashion of

speech. The young ladies called him a "fool"—a term of endearment as they applied it, meaning that he kept them in a more or less continuous state of merriment. They enjoyed his fun and sage remarks, but it is unlikely that they predicted for him literary fame. Yet in later years they remembered that Sam very often carried a book under his arm—a history, a volume of Dickens, or the tales of Poe.

He read more than they supposed. At night, propped up in bed—a habit never abandoned—he read and smoked until a late hour. A young man named Edward Brownell occupied a room over the office, and was on his way to it one night when he heard Sam Clemens call. He poked his head in at the door.

"What are you reading, Sam?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing much; a so-called funny book. One of these days I'll write a funnier book than that, myself."

"No, you won't," grinned Brownell. "You are too lazy ever to write a book."

The Keokuk period of Mark Twain's life extended over something less than two years. It was not distinguished for its achievements, but neither was it unimportant. At a printers' dinner he made what was probably his first speech. It must have pleased his hearers, for they impressed him into a debating society, and there was always a stir of attention when he was about to take the floor.

Orion's printing office was not a prosperous one. When he found that he could pay Sam no wages he

took him into partnership, which was no great improvement so far as Sam could discover. Matters were at sixes and sevens, as the latter complainingly wrote to his mother, and in a letter two months later we come upon a new prospect. A book on the upper Amazon, by Lieutenant Herndon, had fired Sam Clemens with a desire to go to the headwaters of the great South American river, there to collect coco and make a fortune. It did not occur to him that it might be difficult to get to the Amazon. It was his nature to see results with a dazzling largeness that blinded him to the details of achievement. He wrote of this characteristic long after; he said:

"I still do the thing . . . and reflect afterward. Always violently. When I am reflecting on these occasions, even deaf persons can hear me think."

Sam had no supply of funds. Orion had promised him at least fifty dollars that fall, but there was little hope of getting it. The Amazon trip, therefore, did not seem very imminent until fate or Providence or accident—whatever we may choose to call the unaccountable—all at once took the matter in hand. Again, as in the case of the Joan of Arc episode, the wind was the messenger. One of those incredible things, more strange than any fiction, happened.

On a day early in November, bleak, bitter, gusty with curling snow, Samuel Clemens, passing along Main Street, saw a bit of paper whirl past him and lodge against the side of a building. Something about it attracted him and he captured it. It was a fifty-dollar bill. He had never seen one before, but he

recognized it. He thought he must be having a pleasant dream. He was tempted to pocket his good fortune and say nothing; in the end he advertised his find.

"I didn't describe it very particularly," he once declared, "and I waited in daily fear that the owner would turn up and take away my fortune. By and by I couldn't stand it any longer. My conscience had got all that was coming to it. I felt that I must take that money out of danger."

He decided to make Cincinnati his first stop. His fifty dollars would take him that far; he would work at his trade and so provide himself with means to continue the Amazon adventure. The owner of the Keokuk *Saturday Post* had faith in Sam's literary gifts, for he agreed to pay him five dollars each for a series of letters of travel—certainly excellent payment, for that time and locality. The first of these letters, dated at Cincinnati, November 14, 1856, fixes within a few days the time of his arrival. The letter itself, written in the exaggerated dialect then considered humorous, has little or no hint in it of Mark Twain. He was presently working in the printing office of Wrightson & Co., rooming with an unsmiling Scotchman named Macfarlane, a man twice Sam's age, who did some heavy mechanical work the nature of which he never confessed and Sam never learned. Macfarlane was a student and considerably in advance of his time. He had already formulated the theory concerning the descent of man which Darwin and Wallace published later. His human philosophy,

which abandoned all creeds and traditions, made a deep impression on his young companion.

Spring came, and with the quickening of the sap the young coco hunter began to bestir himself for the next stage of his journey. The way to New Orleans seemed most inviting. He had saved some money, and one day engaged passage on the steamer *Paul Jones*, thus conferring lasting fame on that ancient craft. He looked forward to a week of idle luxury; certainly he had little thought that his river voyaging was to continue through four sunlit years.

In *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain tells us that he ran away from home, as a boy, vowing never to return except as a pilot. But this is fiction. He was in his twenty-second year, and the facts are as here set down. It is true that the old pilot ambition had never wholly died. Some of his boyhood friends were already pilots—each, as it were, a king in his own right. The old romance of river life stirred strongly within him as the little *Paul Jones* dropped down out of the Ohio into the majestic river, between shores that became ever more luxuriant with spring.

Horace Bixby, pilot of the *Paul Jones*, a man of thirty-two, was looking out over the bow, at the head of Island No. 35, when he heard behind him a slow, pleasant voice:

“Good-morning, sir.”

Mr. Bixby, a small, brisk man, gave a friendly good-morning without looking around. He was not inclined to encourage visitors in the pilot house. This one came a little closer.

"How would you like a young man to learn the river?" he drawled.

Bixby glanced over his shoulder and saw a rather slender young fellow, with a fair, girlish complexion and a tangle of auburn hair.

"I wouldn't like it. Cub pilots are more trouble than they're worth. A great deal more trouble than profit."

"I am a printer by trade," the drawling voice went on; "it doesn't agree with me. I thought I'd go to South America."

Mr. Bixby kept his eye on the river. "What makes you pull your words that way?" he asked—"pulling" being the river word for drawling.

The young man had taken a seat on the visitors' bench.

"You'll have to ask my mother," he said, more slowly than ever. "She pulls hers, too."

The reply appealed to Mr. Bixby's sense of humor. His laugh encouraged his visitor to another advance.

"Do you know the Bowen boys?" he asked, "pilots in the St. Louis and New Orleans trade?"

"I know them well. William Bowen did his first steering for me."

"Old schoolmates of mine, in Hannibal. Sam and Will were my chums."

"Come over and stand by me," said Bixby. "What is your name?"

"Samuel Clemens," said the caller, and the two stood looking at the sunny water.

"Do you drink?"

"No."

"Do you gamble?"

"No, sir."

"Do you swear?"

"Not for amusement; only under pressure."

"Do you chew?"

"No, sir, never, but I *must* smoke."

"Did you ever do any steering?"

"I've steered everything on the river but a steamboat, I guess."

"Very well, take the wheel and see what you can do with a steamboat. Keep her as she is—toward that lower cottonwood snag."

Bixby had a sore foot and was glad of a little relief. He sat down on the bench and kept a careful eye on the course. By and by he said:

"There is just one way I would take a young man to learn the river—that is, for money."

"What—do you—charge?"

"Five hundred dollars, and I to be at no expense whatever."

In those days pilots were allowed to carry a learner, or cub, board free. Mr. Bixby meant that he was to be at no expense in port or for incidentals. Sam said:

"I haven't got five hundred dollars in money. I've got a lot of Tennessee land, worth two bits an acre; I'll give you two thousand acres of that."

"No," said Bixby, "I don't want any unimproved real estate; I have too much already."

Sam remembered Pamela's husband, from whom

he thought he might be able to borrow a hundred dollars without straining his credit.

"Well, then," he said, "I'll give you one hundred dollars, cash, and the rest when I earn it."

Horace Bixby considered. This young man of slow, pleasant speech and unhurried movement appealed to him. The terms proposed were agreed upon. The deferred payments were to begin when the pupil had learned the river and was receiving pilot's wages.

At New Orleans Bixby changed from the *Paul Jones* to a fine St. Louis boat, taking his cub with him.

IX

THE CUB PILOT

MISSISSIPPI RIVER piloting in that day was a regal occupation. The pilot was a law unto himself; his direction of the boat was absolute. He could land the boat or lay it up when he chose. If he consulted the captain it was merely a matter of courtesy.

Furthermore, the pilot was a gentleman. His work was clean and physically light. It ended the instant the boat was tied to the landing, and did not begin again until it was ready to be backed into the stream. His salary for those days was princely—the Vice-President of the United States received no more. No wonder Sam Clemens, with his love of the river and his boyish fondness for distinction, aspired to that stately office. He knew—he must have known—something of the great task he had undertaken: that of learning twelve hundred miles of a shifting river, with its countless snags and shoals and caving banks; to become as familiar with it by night or by day as the hallway in his own home.

On the way up the river Bixby had begun to give him instructions. In the Mississippi book the author tells of 'this in his delightful fashion. Bixby was a small man, hot and quick firing, though kindly, too,

and gentle, when he had blown off. Just one brief example of his teaching methods. He had been casually naming the points and crossings during the afternoon, and some hours later, on the night watch, he began an examination to test the memory of his apprentice. Apparently Sam had forgotten everything. Finally Bixby asked:

"Look here! What do you start from, above Twelve-Mile Point, to cross over?"

"I—I—don't know."

"You—you—don't know," mimicking my drawling manner of speech. "What *do* you know?"

"I—I—nothing for certain."

Bixby exploded. Then:

"Look here, what do you suppose I told you the names of those points for?"

I tremblingly considered a moment—then the devil of temptation provoked me to say, "Well—to—to be entertaining, I thought."

This was a red flag to the bull. He raged and stormed so (he was crossing the river at the time) that I judged it made him blind, because he ran over the steering-oar of a trading-scow. Never was a man so grateful as Mr. Bixby was, because he was brimful, and here were subjects who could *talk back*. He threw open a window, thrust his head out, and such an eruption followed as I had never heard before. The fainter and farther away the scow-men's curses drifted, the higher Mr. Bixby lifted his voice and the weightier his adjectives grew. When he closed the window he was empty. You could have drawn a seine through his system and not caught curses enough to disturb your mother with. Presently he said to me, in the gentlest way: "My boy, you must get a little memorandum book, and every time I tell you a thing put it down, right away. There's only one way to be a pilot and that is to get this entire river by heart. You have to know it just like A-B-C."

Sam Clemens bought the little book, at the next stop, and presently it "fairly bristled" with the names of towns, points, bars, islands, bends, and reaches, but it made his heart ache to think that he had only half these things set down, for as the watches were four hours off and four hours on, there were long gaps between during which he had slept. The little notebook still exists, its neat, tiny entries still telling the story of that first trip. And those long four-hour gaps where he had been asleep, they are still there, and somehow the old heartache is still in them. Mark Twain, easy-going, dreamy, impracticable, as he appeared in later years, must have loved the river to have persisted against all discouragement in the work he had undertaken.

In time Samuel Clemens accumulated a store of river knowledge, and this was not all. He learned human nature there. Steamboat men were never celebrated for their fastidiousness. The mate and the deck hand were the direct descendants of the old keel-boat men of the earliest river navigation. Captains and pilots were of grand estate, but they were not angels. Sam Clemens broadened his vocabulary on the river, and if its additions were not always polite, and if he did not always sift the quality of his wit, we may also remember that he was an extreme example of a human being in the making. Certainly life was a great school for Mark Twain. We may be thankful that it was just what it was—and no more.

The demands of the Missouri River trade took

Horace Bixby away from the Mississippi for a time, and, according to custom, he turned his pupil over to the pilot of the *John J. Roe*. The *Roe* was a very deliberate freight boat, owned and conducted by farmers, but of unbounded hospitality and comfort. Sam Clemens was in heaven on that slow-going, delightful craft, and then by contrast he entered a period of inferno. Bixby returned, made a trip or two and transferred him again, this time to a man named Brown, pilot on the fine new steamer *Pennsylvania*, one of the handsomest boats on the river. Young Clemens was by this time a good steersman, and Bixby probably thought it fortunate to find for him such a berth.

But Brown proved a disappointment. He was illiterate, faultfinding, tyrannical, and vindictive. He took a dislike to Sam, who was none of these things, and the young man despised him almost from the start. He made an effort to please his chief, but to no purpose. Brown nagged him continually.

"Here, where you going, now? Pull her *down*, pull her *down*, do you *hear* me? Dod-durned mud-cat!" Sam found it hard to restrain himself from doing violence to Brown. In the Mississippi book he writes:

I could imagine myself killing Brown; there was no law against that, and that was the thing I always used to do the moment I was abed. Instead of going over my river in my mind, as was my duty, I threw business aside for pleasure, and killed Brown. I killed Brown every night for a month; not in old, stale, commonplace ways, but in new and picturesque ones.

The young man was receiving no wages. The *Pennsylvania* made a round trip in about thirty-five days, with a day or two of idle time at either end. Sam found he could earn two or three dollars a night watching freight on the New Orleans levee. Long afterward he said:

"It was a desolate experience, watching there in the dark among those piles of freight; not a sound, not a living creature astir. But it was not a profitless one. As I sat there alone, those nights, I used to imagine all sorts of situations and possibilities. Those things got into my books by and by, and furnished me with many a chapter."

Even with Brown, piloting had its pleasant features. In a letter which Sam wrote to his sister he tells of a stirring night adventure in the running ice when he and others of the crew went out in the yawl to take soundings. In the same letter he speaks of his brother Henry, for whom he has found a small clerkship on the *Pennsylvania*. It is the first word of that tragic episode which saddened Samuel Clemens's early years and left its mark upon his life. Henry Clemens at this time was twenty years old, a handsome, gentle boy. He became third clerk on the *Pennsylvania*, and it was a great comfort to have him along. The naggings of Brown seemed easier to bear.

The relief was brief enough. The *Pennsylvania* was on the way down the river, one morning, when Henry appeared on the hurricane deck to bring notice from the captain of a landing. Brown was rather

deaf, but would never confess it. Very likely he did not understand the order: when he was opposite the landing he went straight ahead. The captain, whose name was Klinefelter, appeared on the deck and called to him.

"Didn't Henry tell you to land here?"

"No, sir."

Captain Klinefelter turned to Sam, "Didn't you hear him?"

"Yes, sir."

Brown said: "Shut your mouth. You never heard anything of the kind."

Below the landing, Henry came into the pilot house, unaware of any trouble. Brown in his ugliest manner said:

"Here, why didn't you tell me we had got to land at that plantation?"

Henry said, respectfully, "I did tell you, Mr. Brown."

"It's a lie."

Sam Clemens flamed up: "You lie yourself. He did tell you."

Brown was dazed for a moment; then he shouted, "I'll attend to your case in half a minute." And to Henry, "You get out of here."

The boy had started, when Brown suddenly seized him by the collar and struck him in the face. Instantly Sam was upon Brown with a heavy stool and stretched him on the floor. Then all the accumulated indignation possessed the young man, and, leaping upon Brown and holding him with his knees, he

pounded him with his fists until his strength and fury were exhausted. Brown, finding himself free, sprang with pilot instinct to the wheel, for the boat had been drifting. Seeing there was no danger, he seized a spyglass as a weapon.

"Get out of this here pilot house," he raged.

But Sam lingered and calmly corrected Brown's English. He felt that nothing could make matters worse. He would probably be hanged for mutiny, as it was.

A group of passengers and white-aproned servants had assembled on the forward deck and applauded the conqueror. Sam left Brown raging and went below to find Captain Klinefelter. He expected to be put in irons. The captain took him into his private room and closed the door. He looked at the culprit thoughtfully.

"Did you strike him first?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"What with?"

"A stool, sir."

"Hard?"

"Middling, sir."

"Did you knock him down?"

"He—he fell, sir."

"Did you follow it up? Did you do anything further?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you do?"

"Pounded him, sir."

"Pounded him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you pound him much—that is, severely?"

"One might call it that, sir, maybe."

"I am deuced glad of it! Hark ye, never mention that I said

that. You have been guilty of a great crime; and don't ever be guilty of it again on this boat, *but*—lay for him ashore! Give him a good sound thrashing. Do you hear? I'll pay the expenses."

Sam heard Captain Klinefelter laughing to himself as the door closed behind him.

Brown forbade him the pilot house, swearing he would leave the boat at New Orleans if Sam Clemens remained on it, and Captain Klinefelter told him to go, offering to let Sam run the daylight watches alone. But the young steersman had less confidence, and advised the captain to keep Brown for the up trip. He would follow by another boat, and resume his place when Brown was gone. It was a decision that probably saved his life.

Henry Clemens usually joined his brother during the night watches on the levee, and the two made the rounds chatting together. On the night before the departure of the *Pennsylvania* they spoke of disasters on the river. Sam, who had had a vivid and troublesome dream, said, finally:

"In case of accident, whatever you do, don't lose your head. The passengers will do that. Rush for the hurricane deck and the lifeboat and obey the mate's orders. When the boat is launched help the women and children into it. Don't get in yourself. The river is only a mile wide; you can swim ashore easily enough."

Coming up the river on the *A. T. Lacy*, two days behind the *Pennsylvania* and approaching Greenville, Mississippi, Samuel Clemens heard a voice shout from the landing:

"The *Pennsylvania* is blown up, just below Memphis, at Ship Island. One hundred and fifty lives lost."

Farther up the river they received added news, with the names of some of the victims. Henry Clemens was mentioned as being scalded beyond recovery.

All of the reports were true. At six o'clock of a warm mid-June morning, while loading wood sixty miles below Memphis, four out of eight of the *Pennsylvania's* boilers had suddenly exploded, with fearful results. All the forward end of the boat had been blown out. Samuel Clemens found his brother stretched upon a mattress on the floor of an improvised hospital. Henry was one of those who had been blown into the river by the explosion. He had started to swim for the shore, but presently, feeling no pain, had turned back to assist in the rescue of others. Perhaps he had really been uninjured at first and had been scalded in his work of rescue. It will never be known. He was terribly burned, and died on the fourth night following the catastrophe. His brother always held himself responsible for the boy's death, and his remorse did not spare him. He never really looked young again. Gray hairs began to come, his face took on that serious, pathetic look which from that time it always had in repose.

X

PILOT SAMUEL CLEMENS—THE SOLDIER

THE young pilot returned to the river as steersman with Captain Klinefelter who had survived the disaster. Pilot Brown was one of the victims. Sam steered all that summer, and in September of that year (1858) obtained a full license as a Mississippi River pilot. In eighteen months he had packed away in his head all the endless mass of statistics and acquired that confidence and courage which made him one of the elect. He knew every snag and bank and dead tree and reef in all those endless miles of shifting current, every cut-off and crossing. He could read the surface of the water by day, he could smell danger in the dark. He was accounted a good pilot. To the writer of these chapters Horace Bixby said:

“Sam was not only a pilot, but a good one. Sam was a *fine* pilot, and in a day when piloting required a great deal more brains than it does now. There were no signal lights along the shore in those days, and no searchlights on the vessels; everything was blind, and on a dark, misty night, in a river full of snags and shifting sandbars and changing shores, a pilot’s judgment had to be founded on absolute certainty.”

Bixby had returned from the Missouri and the two

were again together, this time as partners and equals. Young Sam Clemens had plenty of money now. He could help his mother with a liberal hand, and he did it. He also helped Orion, both with money and with advice. He had become all at once the head of the family.

For Samuel Clemens these were halcyon days, the most independent and tranquil that he would ever know. The river with its languorous deliberate life exactly suited him. He loved it all as he would never quite love anything again. He was of great popularity. His humorous stories and quaint speech made a crowd collect wherever he appeared. Some of his droll sayings and stories found their way into the New Orleans papers. Perhaps he occasionally contributed something. Horace Bixby remembered in later years that "Sam was always scribbling when not at the wheel."

One of his efforts, at least, found its way into print—an unhappy circumstance, as it turned out. It was a burlesque of an old steamboat captain, a sort of oldest inhabitant of the river, who had a passion for airing his ancient knowledge before the younger men. The burlesque of Captain Sellers would hardly be worth remembering to-day were it not for its association with what is probably the best known of literary names, the one which Samuel Clemens himself in time adopted. Sellers used to send paragraphs to the New Orleans papers, often beginning, "My opinion for the citizens of New Orleans, etc." These he usually signed, "Mark Twain." The young pilots amused

themselves by giving imitations of Captain Sellers, but Samuel Clemens went a step farther. He wrote a ridiculous imitation of the old captain's newspaper contributions, describing a perfectly impossible trip which the writer was supposed to have made in 1763, with a Chinese captain and a Choctaw crew. It appeared in the *True Delta* in May, 1859, and broke Captain Sellers's literary heart. He never contributed another paragraph. Mark Twain always regretted the whole matter, and his own revival of the name was a sort of tribute to the old man he had thoughtlessly wounded.

There were times in his life when Samuel Clemens was rather careless in his dress, but it was not while he was on the river. His associates of that day afterward remembered him as a spruce, even dandified young pilot, often clad in blue serge and white duck, his beard cut in the atrocious mutton-chop fashion of that period, which had the effect of adding to his apparent age.

The pilots regarded him as a great reader, a student of history, travel, even the sciences—a young man whom it was worth while to know. Sam began the study of French one day in New Orleans, at a school where French, German, and Italian were taught, a language in each of three rooms. The price was twenty-five dollars for each language, or all three for fifty dollars. The student received a set of conversation cards and was supposed to walk from one apartment to another, changing tongues at each threshold. With his usual enthusiasm the young pilot decided to

take all three languages. But after making a few round trips of the rooms he decided that for the present French would do. He was a faithful student; his river notebook contains French exercises—among them a dialogue from Voltaire.

The old river notebook is one of the most fascinating of the Mark Twain relics. It preserves somehow the bloom and poetry of an era of romance of which it was a physical part. The notes themselves are mere memoranda, brief, crisp, often cryptographic, many of them conveying little enough to the lay mind. But an entry made in January, 1861, under the heading of "2d high-water trip—*Alonzo Child*," suggests a picture of swirling water, blind passages, and black nights.

Good deal of water all over Coles Creek Chute, 12 or 15 ft. bank—could have gone up shore above General Taylors—too much drift. . . .

Night—didn't run either 77 or 76 towheads—8 ft. bank on main shore Ozark Chute.

One gets an impression of a lonely figure in a lofty, glassed-in perch, picking his way up the wild, hungry river, which he must know as a man knows the hall of his own home.

The old notebook contains no record of disasters. Horace Bixby declared, "Sam Clemens never had an accident, either as steersman or as pilot, except once when he got aground for a few hours, with no damage to anybody."

Bixby and Clemens were together that winter, on

the *Alonzo Child*, and a letter to Orion contains an account of a great feasting which the two enjoyed at a French restaurant in New Orleans—"dissipating on a ten-dollar dinner—tell it not to Ma!"

Samuel Clemens, at this time twenty-five years old, had adopted, as he believed, his life profession. No one dreamed that within a few months a great national upheaval would close the Mississippi and bring his career as a pilot to a sudden end. Even a celebrated clairvoyant fortune teller, whom he visited in February, 1861, and who told him some rather remarkable things concerning his future, entirely overlooked the Civil War, then a little more than two months away.

It came, nevertheless. President Lincoln was inaugurated in March. The smouldering discontent of the South suddenly broke into flame. Fort Sumter was fired on, men began to speak out and take sides.

It was a momentous time for pilots. For the most part they knew little of politics and were not quite sure as to the rights of the situation. Some favored the Union, some the Confederacy. Horace Bixby was one of the former, and in time became chief of the Union River Service. A pilot named Montgomery (Sam had once steered for him) cast his lot with the South and later commanded the Confederate Mississippi Fleet. They were all good friends in the beginning.

Samuel Clemens was neither radical nor blood-thirsty. He restrained his desire for war.

"I'll think about it," he said. "I'm not very

anxious to get up into a glass perch and be shot at by either side. I'll go home and reflect on the matter."

He went up the river as a passenger, on a steamer named the *Uncle Sam*. An old steering partner, Zeb Leavenworth, was one of the pilots. At Memphis they barely escaped the blockade. They saw war preparations all along. At Cairo, Illinois, soldiers were drilling—troops later to be commanded by Grant.

The *Uncle Sam* came steaming up abreast of St. Louis, and was opposite Jefferson Barracks when there came the boom of a cannon and those aboard saw a great ring of smoke drift in their direction. They did not realize its meaning and kept on. A minute later a shell exploded directly in front of the pilot house, breaking a lot of glass and damaging some of the decorations. Zeb Leavenworth tumbled into a corner.

"Good Lord Almighty, Sam!" he yelled. "What do they mean by that?"

Sam Clemens stepped to the wheel and brought the boat around.

"I guess they want us to wait a minute, Zeb," he said.

They were examined and passed. It was the last boat allowed through the lines.

Mark Twain's pilot days were over. Fortunately for his peace of mind, he did not realize it. Long afterward he said:

"I loved the profession far better than any I have followed since, and I took a measureless pride in it."

He now proceeded to Hannibal, where he found matters in a rather mixed condition. Missouri was a border state and there was much confusion as to issues. Companies of volunteers were forming, mainly composed of young fellows out for a lark—a sort of camping expedition that had something to do with war. Missouri had cast her lot with the South and Sam Clemens patriotically decided, like Lee, to go with his state. He joined a company of young fellows of his own age, pilots and schoolmates. They organized secretly, for the Union militia had a habit of coming over from Illinois and arresting suspicious armies. It would humiliate the finest army in the world to spend a night in the calaboose. Hence they met in a secluded place above Bear Creek Hill, pledged themselves to sell their lives on the field of glory, then in regular Tom Sawyer fashion they called on their girls and told them that probably they should never see them again. And some of them were in earnest and never did come back, and somewhere sleep in unmarked graves.

That night the army marched through brush and vines toward New London, for it was considered dangerous to follow the road. At the home of Colonel Ralls, of Ralls County, they received a hot breakfast and some encouraging words. They were a nondescript lot, hung all about with a variety of trappings. Colonel Ralls decided that they needed horses to carry all those things, and he sent word around to the neighbors, who brought in a variety of animals, including a small yellow mule which became the prop-

erty of Lieutenant Clemens, such being his title. Nearly all the company were officers, there being only three privates and even those could not be distinguished from their commanders. It was decided to go into camp, so the army moved over to Salt River, and took up headquarters in a big log stable. It was an out-of-the way place, thought to be comparatively safe.

It was not entirely pleasant, however. Heavy rains set in; also there were alarms. Twice on black, drenching nights word came that Union troops, commanded by a certain Colonel Ulysses Grant, were in the neighborhood, and the sleepy Hannibal army went hastily slopping through mud and brush in the other direction, dragging wearily back when the alarm was over. Patriotism is likely to cool under such treatment. Mark Twain used to say afterward that he was once a soldier for two weeks, but that it rained until it washed away all that he thought he was fighting for. There were some further adventures, but the army presently disbanded. Lieutenant Clemens, with a sprained ankle and a high fever, was left at a farmhouse for recovery. When he was able to walk he went up to Keokuk to visit Orion.

It was a good time to arrive in Keokuk. Orion, who had given support to the administration, had been appointed Secretary of Nevada Territory, and needed only funds to carry him to Carson City, the seat of his activities. His brother Sam was therefore welcome. He had saved a considerable amount out of his pilot's wages, and Orion promptly appointed him his

private secretary, an inducement to provide the needed funds.

Sam was willing enough. The overland trip across the plains called to him. Also, at the other end there was always the possibility of adventure, even fortune. "Over the hills and far away" stirs something in all of us, and to nobody would the words convey a more alluring prospect than to Samuel Clemens.

XI

THE PIONEER

MARK TWAIN'S picture of the overland stage journey as presented in *Roughing It* carries a charm as fresh to-day as ever. The brothers went up the Missouri River to St. Jo, and on the 26th of July, 1861, set out on that long, delightful trip, behind sixteen galloping horses or mules, never stopping except for meals or to change teams, heading steadily into the sunset over the billowy plains and across the snow-clad Rockies, covering the seventeen hundred miles between St. Jo and Carson City in nineteen glorious days. They rode on top of the stage most of the day, and nights slept inside, with uneven mailbags for a bed. Every day brought new scenery and almost every night something in the way of adventure. Sometimes the clatter of the pony rider swept by in the dark, carrying letters at five dollars apiece, making the entire trip in eight days. Occasionally they got a glimpse of the pony rider—a mere flash, as he sped by.

The stage drew into Carson City on an August day, fairly sizzling with heat and covered with alkali dust. Two wayworn, unkempt, unshorn individuals climbed down, slouchy and weatherbeaten, and inquired for the hotel. They were Orion Clemens, the

new Territorial Secretary, and his brother, former dandified pilot, later a lieutenant of a forlorn hope, now an obscure adventurer of the frontier.

Mark Twain's first sight of the world he was to conquer was not very stimulating. He saw a little unprepossessing "wooden town" of two thousand population, the human drift which every whirlwind of discovery gathers and sweeps along. Gold and silver hunting and mine speculations were the industries; gambling, drinking, and murder the recreations.

Orion, in his usual meager fashion, established himself in a humble little office which he thought the authorities at Washington would approve. They would have respected him much more if he had housed himself in ornate quarters and run his affairs in a lavish, high-handed fashion.

Samuel Clemens, finding neither duties nor salary attached to his position, devoted himself to the study of frontier life and to the enjoyment of its easy-going freedom. He acquired friends, of course, and these would gather around the little stove in Orion's office in chilly fall evenings and listen to Sam's yarns of the river, told in that inimitable fashion which would win him an audience all his days. He allowed his beard to grow, and adopted the loose, careless dress of the frontier. With his great bushy head of auburn hair, his piercing eyes, and his lounging walk he drew the immediate attention even of strangers. They saw him stand by the hour, staring drowsily at the human kaleidoscope of the public

square, smoking a short clay pipe, lost in contemplation. They thought it a profitless employment. They could not know that it was a priceless education.

He did not immediately catch the mining fever. He thought his stay would be temporary. The war would end presently and he would go back to the river. Some of his friends acquired mining claims and urged him to share them, but his enthusiasm awakened slowly. He heard of the great forests around Lake Tahoe, where timber claims could be had for the asking, and by and by, with a young Ohio lad, John Kinney, made a trip into that mountain wilderness. Everything was as represented: the lake with its measureless depth of water, so clear that to drift upon it was like floating on air; the quiet luxury of the dim solitude; the vast colonnades of pines, wealth incalculable. They staked out a timber claim and made a semblance of fencing it. Also they constructed a primitive house to comply with the law. They did not occupy the house, but lived by their campfire on the borders of the lake. In *Roughing It* Mark Twain writes:

It never occurred to us, for one thing; and, besides, it was built to hold the ground, and that was enough. We did not wish to strain it.

One evening their campfire got away from them, fired the forest, and demolished their fence and habitation. He had by this time developed an interest in mineral prospects, and the timber claim seems to

have been abandoned. Indeed, every other interest was presently lost in that delirium which comes only with the pursuit of precious ores.

The mining fever had become an epidemic. No one was immune from it. Stories of men who had gone to bed paupers and awakened millionaires were on every tongue and were repeated by the press. There was evidence more material than these wild tales. Carloads of ore, even of gold and silver bricks, drove daily through the streets of Carson City. No wonder Samuel Clemens, with his natural tendency to speculative optimism, suddenly found himself, to use his own words, "as frenzied as the craziest."

He joined an expedition starting for the newly opened Humboldt region, two hundred miles away, beyond a desert of alkali and sand. The expedition included two young lawyers, named Oliver and Clagget, and an old blacksmith named Tillou who had some knowledge of mining. Two dogs, a rickety wagon loaded with provisions and mining tools completed the outfit. They had not gone far when they found the horses could not drag the loaded wagon, so the miners got out and walked. Presently they found it necessary to push. Then it began to snow, and through sand and snowstorm they continued to push across that two-hundred-mile desert, sustained by the thought that fortune awaited them at the end of their journey. At night they bundled under the blankets, with the dogs, and when it was too cold to sleep the future entertainer of kings would spin yarn after yarn to make them forget their discomforts.

They were eleven weary days pushing their wagon and team to Unionville, arriving at last in a driving snowstorm.

The gold hunters did not find a fortune, Humboldt prospects proved to be only prospects, and after a brief period of privation and hopeless pecking at flinty edges the prospectors resigned. Clemens returned to Carson City, nearly perishing in a blizzard on the way; Clagget and Oliver hung out law shingles in Unionville, Clagget as a notary public, Oliver as probate judge. Blacksmith Tillou also returned to Carson. History does not state what became of the wagon and team, or of the two dogs.

It was the end of January when he returned to Carson. A few weeks later we find him at another bleak wintry camp, Aurora, in the Esmeralda region, on the edge of California. Here the Clemens brothers had acquired some mining claims, and he had come down to develop them. In his letters home he did not confess his Humboldt failure, and while he tried to be conservative as to future prospects, there were times when his temperament ran away with him until he fairly soared through page after page of golden promise.

Meantime, he was learning the trade of mining from his camping partners, one of whom was Calvin H. Higbie, who would one day be immortalized in the story of *Roughing It*, and in the dedication of that book. Their funds were always low. Sam Clemens had used up his pilot savings, and Orion was now financing the work from his slender salary. The prices

of food became exorbitant. There were times when flour sold as high as a dollar a pound, and the dollar was not forthcoming. Everything was frozen and covered with snow. The ledges which were to yield their fortunes were buried deep under the ice and drift. Around the cabin stove they would gather and paw over their specimens and test them with the blowpipe.

There were days when the ex-pilot made them forget their troubles with diverting tales, though sometimes he talked not at all, but sat crouched in the corner, writing—letters, as they thought. Often he *was* writing letters—terse, tense, even profane letters, to Orion in Carson City, detailing conditions, resenting all interference on Orion's part, reiterating his faith and his intention of sticking it out to the end. He closes one letter with:

Send me \$40 or \$50—by mail—immediately. I go to work to-morrow with pick and shovel. Something's got to come, by G—, before I let go here.

This was a period of real labor—back-breaking and blistering—the first he had ever really known.

Not many of the letters went to his people—there was so little to write. And apparently not many came in reply, for in a letter to Orion, in which he says: "Couldn't go to the hill to-day. It snowed. It always snows here, I expect," he added the final heartsick line, "Don't you suppose they have pretty much quit writing at home?"

He was not always writing letters. One or two

of those sent home had been reprinted in a Keokuk paper. Copies containing them had gone back to Orion, who had shown them to a representative of the *Territorial Enterprise*, published at Virginia City. The *Enterprise* reprinted at least one of them, and perhaps this stirred the old literary impulse, for some of his writing on those stormy afternoons went to the *Enterprise*—sketches signed “Josh,” crude burlesques, but suited to the frontier. They brought no return in money, but they were printed, and, though the author would have been the last to believe it, he was knocking, however lightly, at the door of the House of Fame.

In *Roughing It*, Mark Twain tells us that when provisions reached a prohibitive price he went to work as a common laborer in a quartz mill, at ten dollars per week. He did go to work in the mill, partly for the reason named and partly to learn something of the process, in the prospect of one day having a mill of his own. A week of it, however, satisfied him. He contracted a violent cold and was nearly poisoned by the chemicals.

It is about at this place that the “blind lead” episode of *Roughing It* belongs. The story as told in that book is mainly fiction, though there was a “Wide West” mine and Higbie and Clemens forfeited their claims in it through neglect.

Meantime the “Josh” letters to the *Enterprise* had attracted the attention of Joseph T. Goodman, owner and editor of that paper. There was need of another reporter, and in July (1862), a letter came

from the business manager, Barstow, to the all but discouraged miner, with an offer of twenty-five dollars a week. He had already been trying to get something to do in the way of newspaper letters, which he had agreed to write for as little as five dollars each, but he was not entirely ready to abandon his mining claim. He replied, asking when they thought he might be needed. He was playing for time to consider. He wanted to go into the wilderness, to think it out. To Orion he wrote:

I shall leave at midnight to-night, alone and on foot, for a walk of 60 or 70 miles through a totally uninhabited country.

He had made no decision when he returned, eight days later. Indeed, in a letter to his sister Pamela he declared, "This country suits me and it shall suit me, whether or no." He was dying hard—desperately hard, and never quite confessing defeat.

Just how and when the end came cannot now be known. But one hot, dusty, August afternoon, a travel-stained pilgrim drifted wearily into the office of the Virginia City *Enterprise* and, loosening a heavy roll of blankets, dropped into a chair. He wore a rusty slouch hat, no coat, a faded blue flannel shirt, a navy revolver; his trousers hung loosely from his boot tops. His reddish-brown hair and his tawny beard were dingy with alkali dust. Aurora lay one hundred and thirty miles from Virginia City. The stranger had walked that distance, carrying his heavy load. Editor Goodman was absent at the moment, but the other proprietor, Denis E. McCarthy, sig-

nified that the caller might state his errand. The wanderer regarded him with a far-away look and said, absently and with deliberation:

"My starboard leg seems to be unshipped. I'd like about a hundred yards of line; I think I am falling to pieces." Then he added, "I want to see Mr. Barstow or Mr. Goodman. My name is Clemens and I have come to write for the paper."

It was the master of the world's widest estate, come to claim his kingdom.

XII

A COMSTOCK JOURNALIST—MARK TWAIN

THE *Territorial Enterprise* was then in the hey-day of its prosperity. Joseph T. Goodman and Denis McCarthy had scraped together a few dollars, a year or two earlier, and bought it as a forlorn hope. Then had come the discovery of the Comstock Lode, out of which poured a flood of silver that would presently inundate the markets of the world. On that tide of fortune the *Enterprise*, from a starving sheet in a shanty, was borne swiftly to undreamed heights of power and affluence. William Wright (known as Dan de Quille), city editor, was about to leave for a trip to the States when Clemens arrived, and it was partly for this reason that he had been summoned. Goodman wanted him for the local work. He believed the man who had written the "Josh" sketches could give the items just the right touch. He was not disappointed. The months he had spent in Carson, the hard days in Humboldt and in the Esmeralda camp, had given Sam Clemens just the knowledge of frontier life needed for his work. His pilot memory gave him the faculty of accuracy as to details, his humor and picturesque phrasing made his vehicle of expression ideal. Joseph Goodman—"Joe," as they all called him—

realized immediately that he had drawn a prize, and allowed him a latitude suited to his gifts. De Quille returned from the East and added to the general gayety. Goodman let his staff write and print, with almost no restraint. A reporter of those early times wrote of the *Enterprise*:

The indifference to news was noble. Editors Mark or Dan would dismiss a murder with a couple of inches and sit down and fill up a column with a fancy sketch.

Some of the sketches were indeed fancy. Sam Clemens wrote a number of hoaxes that not only fooled readers, but many papers along the Coast, who did not much relish being taken in by the new "smart" writer on the *Enterprise*. Yet these constituted the beginnings of fame.

Clemens, himself, was often a victim of practical jokes; his droll manner and rare invective made him an inviting subject. One of the *Enterprise* composers, Stephen E. Gillis, was his bosom friend. Steve, however, was a merciless joker and never could resist the temptation of "making Sam swear." There was no gas in the office, and each reporter had a lamp which he kept in order, for his own use. Sam Clemens detested the care of a lamp and wrote by the light of a candle.

To "hide Sam's candle" was a favorite way to set him going. He would look for it a little, then he would begin a slow circular walk—a habit acquired in the pilot house—and his denunciation of the thieves was a fierce oratorio. On one such night a very

mild young minister who had taken a fancy to Clemens happened to step into the office just when he was denouncing the thieves in the most lurid terms. Sam admired the young minister, whose name was Rising, and wished to preserve his respect. What was his horror, then, to come face to face with Mr. Rising, spellbound, as it were, by his language. He could not immediately shut off the flow, and he did not pause in his treadmill walk. In a slow monotone he said:

"I know, Mr. Rising, I know it's wicked to talk like this; I know I shall certainly go to hell for it. But if you had a candle, Mr. Rising, and those thieves should carry it off every night, I know that you would say, just as I say, Mr. Rising, G—d d—n their impenitent souls. May they roast in hell for a million years!"

The little clergyman caught his breath. "Maybe I should, Mr. Clemens," he replied, "but I should try to say, 'Forgive them, Father; they know not what they do.'"

"Oh, well," conceded Sam, "if you put it on the ground that they are just fools, that alters the case, as I'm one of that class, myself."

There was a side to Samuel Clemens that in those days few of his associates saw. Joseph Goodman realized it, and often the two men dining together discussed life's subtler phases or recalled poems that gave them especial pleasure. "The Burial of Moses" appealed strongly to Clemens and he recited it with great power. With eyes half closed and chin lifted, a

lighted cigar between his fingers, he would lose himself in the music of the stately lines:

“By Nebo’s lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan’s wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulcher,
And no man saw it e’er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod
And laid the dead man there.”

He was deeply impressed by the simple grandeur of the poem. We find it copied in his notebook, and it may easily have been the starting point of the pure and direct English of his later years.

The Nevada legislature was about to meet, and one evening at dinner Clemens proposed to Goodman that he allow him to report its proceedings for the *Enterprise*. He was without experience in that field, and Goodman hesitated. Then reflecting that whether Sam got the details right or not, the result would be interesting reading, he gave consent.

A frontier legislature is bound to be picturesque.

The Nevada assembly was just the kind of place to develop Samuel Clemens’s native literary gift. He made blunders in his reports, of course. But he was so frank in his ignorance and in his confession of it, that the very mistakes of his early letters became their chief charm. A young man named Gillespie, clerk of the House, coached him on parliamentary matters, with beneficial results. Clemens, in return, christened Gillespie, “Young Jefferson’s Manual,”

a title which he bore, proudly, indeed, for the rest of his life.

More experienced reporters presumed at first to ridicule the *Enterprise* letters. This was a mistake; Sam Clemens was a master in that field. In one of his letters he so drenched a presuming rival, named Rice, with satire and derision that from that time forward Rice was commonly known as the "Unreliable."

Billy Clagget, who had journeyed with Sam Clemens to the Humboldt, had returned to Carson as member of the House. Clemens and Clagget were good friends, and Jack Simmons, Speaker of the House, was their special crony. These three were the conspicuous figures of the session. A group photograph still exists of them. It shows Samuel Clemens in the fashionable dress of that period. He no longer wore the loose array of his earlier Carson days.

No doubt it was gratifying to the former prospector and miner to come back to the capital a person of consequence. He could afford to smile at the hard Esmeralda days.

He was not entirely satisfied, however. His letters to the *Enterprise*, copied all along the Coast, were unsigned. They were easily identified with one another, but not with a personality. To build a reputation it was necessary to have a name.

Clemens reflected upon the matter, trying to hit upon something brief, crisp, and unforgettable. Just then (it was early in 1863) news came that the old pilot Isaiah Sellers, whom he had once wounded with his satire, was dead. At once the pen name of Captain

Sellers recurred to him. It was just what he wanted. He went up to Virginia City.

"Joe," he said to Goodman, "I want to sign my articles. I want to be identified to a wider audience."

"All right, Sam. What name do you want to use—Josh?"

"No. I want to sign them 'Mark Twain.' It is an old river term, a leadsman's call, signifying two fathoms—twelve feet. It has a richness about it; it was always a pleasant sound for a pilot to hear on a dark night; it meant safe water."

He did not then mention that Captain Sellers had used and dropped the name. He was ashamed of his part in that episode. Goodman considered a moment.

"Very well, Sam," he said, "that sounds like a good name."

It was indeed a good name. To-day it seems to us exactly suited to the man, his work, his career. We feel, somehow, that he could not have adopted any other had he tried.

"Mark Twain" was first signed to an *Enterprise* letter February 2, 1863, and from that time was attached to all of Samuel Clemens's work. Those picturesque Carson reports had acquired a personality and a new interest. The writer of them began to be called "Mark" not only in print, but by his associates. The name "Mark Twain" became known up and down the Coast.

In the letters which Samuel Clemens wrote home at this period there is no reference to these things.

They are cheerful, youthful letters, and bear evidence that he had renewed his old river habit of inclosing money. From one of them we get a sharp reminder of Comstock life. He says:

I have just heard five pistol-shots down the street—as such things are in my line, I will go and see about it.

5 A. M. the pistol-shots did their work well. One man, a Jackson Country Missourian, shot two of my friends (police officers) through the heart—both died within three minutes. The murderer's name is John Campbell.

More than one national character came out of the Comstock. Among them John Mackay, a miner, at first, with pick and shovel; then a superintendent, though with no immediate prospects of wealth. Mark Twain one day jokingly proposed to trade jobs with him.

“No,” said Mackay. “My business is not worth as much as yours. I have never swindled anybody, and I don't intend to begin now.”

XIII

ARTEMUS WARD—A SPEECH

THIS was in 1863, and in that year a new and important literary influence came into Mark Twain's life. Charles F. Browne, who signed himself Artemus Ward, one day arrived in Virginia City. He was on a lecture tour and had expected to stay only a day or two, but the whirl of the Comstock ensnared him. He made the office his headquarters, and with the *Enterprise* group dined almost every evening at Chaumond's, a French restaurant, the best on the Coast.

In Mark Twain, Artemus Ward recognized a kindred spirit. At the height of his own fame, he took occasion to encourage his brother humorist, prophesying great things for him. Joseph Goodman remembered afterward that, observing the two together, they all rated Sam as Ward's equal in mental stature and originality. At a Christmas Eve dinner given by Ward to the *Enterprise* staff they had a chance to compare the two. When the cocktails came on, Artemus rose, lifted his glass, and said:

"I give you upper Canada."

Rising, the company drank the toast in serious silence. Then Goodman said:

"Of course, Artemus, it's all right, but why did you give us upper Canada?"

"Because I don't want it myself," said Ward, gravely.

Then began a rising tide of humor that could hardly be matched in the world to-day. Mark Twain's genius was awakening; Artemus Ward was in his prime. They were giants of a race that became extinct when Mark Twain died.

Goodman remained rather quiet during the evening. Ward had appointed him to order the dinner, and he attended to the details without mingling much in the conversation. When Ward asked him why he did not join in the banter, he said:

"I am preparing a joke, Artemus, but I am keeping it for the present."

It was near daybreak when the bill was at last presented. It was for two hundred and thirty-seven dollars.

"What!" exclaimed Artemus.

"*That's* my joke," said Goodman.

"But I was exclaiming because it is not twice as much," returned Ward, laying the money on the table.

In great good nature they went out into the early morning air. Artemus threw his face up to the sky and said:

"I feel glorious; I feel like walking on roofs!"

Virginia is built on a steep hillside; the eaves of some of the houses almost touch the ground behind them.

"There is your chance," Goodman said, pointing to a row of these houses, all about of a height.

Artemus grabbed Mark Twain and they stepped out upon a long string of roofs and walked their full length, with locked arms. It was an unusual performance. A policeman came near shooting at them, for burglars.

That night was the beginning of a week of glory. The farewell dinner became a series. At the close of one session Artemus Ward went to a concert hall, blacked his face, and delivered a speech. That was about the end of the year and closed his stay in Virginia. A day or two later he wrote to Mark Twain, from Austin, Nevada, referring remorsefully to his final performance, and adding:

"I shall always remember Virginia as a bright spot in my existence, as all others must, or rather cannot, be, as it were."

Then, reflectively:

"Some of the finest intellects in the world have been blunted by liquor."

Rare Artemus Ward and rare Mark Twain! If there lies somewhere a place of meeting and remembrance, they have not failed to recall there those closing days of '63.

It was on Artemus Ward's advice that Clemens now sent some sketches to the New York *Sunday Mercury*. One or more of his contributions found acceptance, but without much return either in money or reputation.

Nevada was to become a state in the fall, and the

jokers of the legislature decided to celebrate their final session. They organized a burlesque assembly which they call the "Third House." They decided to hold its first and only session in a church, and to charge admission, the church to have the returns. Of this Third House Mark Twain was selected as "Governor" and his "message" was to be in the form of a speech. His letter of acceptance is more characteristic of his later expression than anything that has been preserved of that time. In it he said:

Although I am not a very dusty Christian myself, I take an absorbing interest in religious affairs, and would willingly inflict my annual message upon the Church itself if it might derive benefit thereby. You can charge what you please; I promise the public no amusement, but I do promise a reasonable amount of instruction. I am responsible to the Third House only, and I hope to be permitted to make it exceedingly warm for that body, without caring whether the sympathies of the public and the Church be enlisted in their favor, and against myself, or not.

With the exception of a short talk at the printers' dinner in Keokuk this was Mark Twain's first appearance as a public speaker, the beginning of a lifelong series of platform triumphs. The building was packed—the aisles full. The audience was ready for fun, and he gave it to them. He was unsparing in his ridicule of the Governor, the officials in general, legislative members, and of individual citizens, including himself. Nobody escaped; from beginning to end the audience was in a storm of laughter and applause. No word of the Third House address has been preserved. We can only be sure that it was a perfect

fit for the occasion. As a token of recognition Clemens was presented with a gold watch, inscribed, "To Governor Mark Twain." Everywhere, now, he was pointed out as a distinguished figure, and his quaint remarks were repeated on the streets.

His day of association with the *Territorial Enterprise* was drawing to a close. A rather ill-natured paragraph written by him in the *Enterprise* brought a heated rejoinder from the editor of the rival paper, the *Union*. The usual violent exchange of recriminations incident to frontier journalism followed, and the inevitable challenge, sent by Mark Twain and duly accepted by the *Union* editor. The duel did not come off—it had been a semi-burlesque affair from the beginning, incited by that inveterate joker, Steve Gillis. But the challenge had been real enough, and the new dueling laws did not distinguish in such cases, whatever the results. Clemens and Gillis were warned that it would be well for them to try the atmosphere of San Francisco, unless they wished to become the first to test the new law. This suited them exactly. San Francisco had long attracted them. They left by the morning stage. Joe Goodman, on horseback, rode with them as far as Henness Pass. He had meant to turn back there, but they were all in such good spirits that he kept on all the way to San Francisco.

XIV

AT THE GOLDEN GATE—MINING AGAIN—THE JUMPING FROG—HAWAII

IT WAS near the end of May, 1864, when Clemens and Gillis arrived in San Francisco, and within a week or two both had accepted positions—Gillis as a compositor, and Clemens as a reporter—on the *Morning Call*. The story in *Roughing It*, that Mark Twain plunged into a period of idleness upon his arrival there, is pure fiction.

Clemens and Gillis roomed together, and the devilish Steve was generally concocting ways to rouse his roommate to violence. Yet these two were always fond of each other—there was never anything resembling estrangement, and to their last days neither Clemens nor Gillis could speak of each other without tenderness.

The position on the *Call* was never congenial to Mark Twain. To be simply a unit of an organization, restricted by orders and a policy, was discouraging. More than once when he turned in some report which criticized city conditions it failed to be printed, for political reasons.

Mark Twain, however, found a way to publish something reflecting on the lack of police discipline. One afternoon he noticed an officer asleep on his

beat. It would be wasted effort to make an item of the incident. Going to a vegetable stall on the corner, he borrowed a large cabbage leaf, came back and stood over the sleeper, gently fanning him. A crowd collected to enjoy it. When he thought it large enough he went away. Next day the joke was all over the city.

Clemens confessed later that he became indifferent and lazy on the *Call*, and loathed the soulless drudgery of the work. He lost interest, and when Mark Twain lost interest in an undertaking its days were numbered, so far as he was concerned.

In *Roughing It*, the author tells us that he was discharged at last for general incompetency. But this is only another example of his lifelong habit of making a story on himself sound as uncomplimentary as possible. He parted with the *Call* on friendly terms, glad to go, and at once began the more congenial work of sending a daily San Francisco letter to the *Enterprise*, a commission for which he received thirty dollars a week. He was also at this period doing a series of sketches for a new literary paper called the *Californian*, which considerably increased his earnings. Very likely he was hard up at times—literary men are often that—but he was never in the condition of poverty pictured in *Roughing It*. Mark Twain was always willing to sacrifice history, and himself, for the sake of a good story.

There was a very pleasant side to the San Francisco life. Even in that long-ago time San Francisco had its literary group, and among its members were those whose names and work would travel far. Joa-

quin Miller was one of the coterie, and his diary of that day records his having seen assembled at one time in the offices of the *Golden Era* Adah Isaacs Menken, Prentice Mulford, Bret Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard, Fitzhugh Ludlow, Mark Twain, Orpheus C. Kerr, Artemus Ward, and several others. Certainly a remarkable group to have been dropped down there behind the Sierras, which the trans-continental railway would not cross for several years.

The *Golden Era*, edited by Joseph E. Lawrence, was a journal of considerable literary pretension, and these were its contributors. The *Era* had luxuriously appointed rooms and they made it their gathering place. They were a happy-hearted, aspiring lot, and received as much as five dollars sometimes for an article, which, of course, seemed a good deal more precious than a much larger sum earned in another way.

Mark Twain and Bret Harte were distinctive features of this group. They were already recognized by their associates as belonging to a class by themselves, though as yet neither had done any of the work for which he would be remembered later. Harte had been a printer on the *Era*, and set up his first articles in type, as he composed them. When the *Californian* was started by Charles Henry Webb, he was made the editor and fitted out with offices suited to his luxurious taste. He paid Mark Twain twelve dollars apiece for his articles, and gave him valuable suggestions as to their preparation. Harte's fame lay all ahead, but those were his best days.

Among the sketches done by Mark Twain for the *Californian* were some of those to-day included in the volume, *Sketches New and Old*. "The killing of Julius Cæsar Localized" was one of these, also "Answers to Correspondents," both excellent of their kind.

In his letters to the *Enterprise*, Mark Twain found the opportunity that had been denied to him on the *Call*. San Francisco was politically corrupt, and Goodman was only too glad to give him a free hand. He attacked the police department with such ferocity that as soon as copies of the *Enterprise* came up from Virginia the city hall was filled with trouble and loud with fierce threats. Stimulated by the commotion, the writer let himself go more vigorously than ever. He sent letters to the *Enterprise* at which even the printers stood aghast. Goodman, however, ordered that every word be printed, adding:

"If Mark can stand it, I can."

The libel suit which Martin G. Burke, chief of police, brought against the *Enterprise* advertised that paper amazingly. Copies were snatched in San Francisco as soon as the Virginia stage arrived.

Unfortunately, as it seemed at the time, Steve Gillis, always a fearless defender of the weak, one night rushed to the assistance of two strangers who had been set upon by three roughs in a barroom. Steve was a fierce and trained fighter and selected the barkeeper, a big bruiser, who was ready for the hospital when the fight ended. But it turned out

that he was a favorite of the police, and a warrant was issued for Gillis on a charge of assault with intent to kill. Clemens, of course, went on his bond, and with other friends advised Steve to go down to Virginia City until the storm blew over. This furnished a choice opportunity for Chief of Police Burke. When the case was called and Gillis did not appear, Burke promptly instituted action against his bondsman, with an execution looking to the possession of his personal effects. If James N. Gillis, brother of Steve, had not happened along just then and spirited Mark Twain away to his mining camp in the Tuolumne Hills, the beautiful gold watch presented to the Governor of the Third House might have been sacrificed in the cause of friendship.

As it was he found himself presently in that remote and peaceful Arcady which Bret Harte would one day picture in his tales of Roaring Camp and Sandy Bar. Jim Gillis was, in fact, the Truthful James of Bret Harte's poem, and his cabin on Jackass Hill had been the retreat of Harte and many another literary wayfarer, who had found there refreshment and peace. It was said that the sick were made well and the well made better in Jim Gillis's cabin on the hilltop, where the air was nectar and the stillness like enchantment.

Gillis himself had literary instincts, and plenty of books. He remained a pocket miner because he loved its fascinations and the quiet of his retreat. He was willing to teach the science to his visitors

and make them his partners. On rainy days he entertained them with amazing stories of his own invention. Standing with his back to the big open fire, he would reel off yarns full of startling adventure and riotous humor, imaginary exploits of his faithful companion, Dick Stoker—Stoker, “forty-six and gray as a rat,” earnest, thoughtful, and tranquilly serene, smoking and looking into the fire, listening to those astonishing things of himself, smiling a little, but saying never a word. In after years Mark Twain put some of those things into his books; among them the story of Dick Baker’s Cat in *Roughing It* and the Jaybird and Acorn incident of *A Tramp Abroad*.

It was early in December, 1864, that Mark Twain arrived at the Gillis cabin—a humble retreat, built under a great live-oak tree and surrounded by a stretch of blue grass. On pleasant days they went pocket mining, following some little fanlike drift of gold specks to its source, somewhere up the hillside. Mark Twain did not make his fortune at it—he only laid its corner stone. In January he went with Gillis and Stoker over into Calaveras County and began work near Angel’s Camp, a place well known to the readers of Bret Harte. One moonlight night when a drifting cloud brought a mist of rain he saw a wonderful lunar rainbow, a rare sight. He thought it an omen of good fortune.

The hotel at Angel’s Camp was nothing to boast of. In his old notebook occurs this entry:

January 27, 1865—same old diet—same old weather—went out to the pocket claim—had to rush back.

It was generally raining, which was bad for the romance of pocket mining. The gold seekers spent a good deal of their time around the rusty stove in the dilapidated tavern, telling stories and enjoying the company of another guest, a former Illinois pilot, Ben Coon, a solemn, fat-witted person who dozed most of the time, or woke up to tell dreary and endless yarns to anyone who would listen.

One somber afternoon, in his slow, monotonous fashion, he told them about a frog—a frog that belonged to a man named Coleman, who trained it to jump. He told how the trained frog failed to win a wager because the owner of a rival frog had surreptitiously loaded the trained jumper with shot. It was an old story in the camps, but neither Clemens nor Gillis had ever happened to hear it before. They thought the tale itself amusing and Coon's solemn manner of telling it still more so. Later, playing billiards on the frowsy table, one would remark:

"I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog," and the other would answer:

"I ain't got no frog, but if I had a frog I'd bet you."

Out on the claim, between pails of water, Clemens, as he watched Jim Gillis or Dick Stoker "washing," would be apt to say, "I don't see no p'int about that pan o' dirt that's any better'n any other pan o' dirt," and so they kept it up. In his notebook, still preserved, Mark Twain made a brief memorandum of the frog story, without comment.

The mining was rather hopeless work; the contin-

uous showers were discouraging. Mark Twain hated that kind of thing. Even when, one afternoon, certain tiny specks of pure gold appeared in the washings, and Jim Gillis became excited at the prospect, Clemens began to protest strenuously as the chilly rain increased. Gillis, as usual, was washing, while Clemens carried the water. Gillis, seeing the "color" improving with every pan, was warm and eager, regardless of wet and cold. The miner's passion dominated him. Clemens, shivering and disgusted, swore that each pail of water was his last; his teeth were chattering and he was wet through. Finally he said, in his deliberate way:

"Jim, I won't carry any more water. This work is too disagreeable."

Gillis had just taken out a panful of dirt.

"Bring one more pail, Sam," he pleaded.

"Oh, hell! Jim, I won't do it. I'm freezing!"

"Just one more pail, Sam," Jim pleaded.

"No, sir, not a drop, not if I knew there was a million dollars in that pan."

Gillis tore out a page of his notebook and hastily posted a thirty-day claim notice by the pan of dirt. It kept on raining, and a letter arrived from Steve Gillis, saying he had settled all his troubles in San Francisco. Clemens decided to go back, and the miners left Angel's Camp for the cabin on Jackass Hill.

Meantime the rain had washed away the top of the pan of dirt left standing on the hillside, exposing a handful of nuggets, pure gold. Two strangers,

Austrians, came along, gathered it up, and, seeing the claim notice posted by Jim Gillis, sat down to wait until it expired. They did not mind the rain, not under the circumstances, and the moment the thirty days were up they followed the lead a few paces farther and took out—some say ten, some twenty, thousand dollars. In either case it was a good pocket that Mark Twain missed by one pail of water. Still, it is just as well, perhaps, when one remembers that more precious nugget of Angel's Camp carried away in Mark Twain's notebook, the story of the Jumping Frog. Jim Gillis always declared:

"If Sam had got that pocket, he would have remained a miner, to the end of his days, like me."

Mark Twain did not immediately write the frog story. To him it was just an amusing fancy of which he would sometime make a sketch. In San Francisco, he found a letter from Artemus Ward asking him to do something for Ward's new book of travels. He wrote to Ward, mentioning the frog story, and received a reply, asking him to write it without delay. He did write it and sent it along, but the book was already in type, and the publisher, Carlton, did not think it worth while to add new material. He handed the manuscript over to Henry Clapp, editor of the *Saturday Press*.

"Here, Clapp," he said, "is something you can use in your paper."

"Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" appeared in the *Saturday Press* of November 18, 1865, and was copied and quoted far and near.

The author did not know for some time what had happened. When at last he heard of the story's success he was not overpleased by it. He had thought the tale rather poor, and Carlton had not cared to use it. In a letter to his mother he wrote:

To think that, after writing many an article a man might be excused for thinking tolerably good, those New York people should single out a villainous backwoods sketch to compliment me on!—"Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"—a squib which would never have been written but to please Artemus Ward.

A New York correspondent of the San Francisco *Alta* wrote, "Mark Twain's story in the *Saturday Press*, of November 18th, called 'Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog,' has set all New York in a roar."

Whether the tale of the Jumping Frog, if it were new to-day, would "set all New York in a roar" is by no means certain. Mark Twain's own opinion of it improved when he heard that James Russell Lowell pronounced it the finest piece of humorous writing yet produced in America.

He now received an invitation to join a select party of guests on the fine new steamer, *Ajax*, bound for Honolulu. He declined it, but it gave him a new idea: he proposed to the publishers of the *Sacramento Union* that they send him to the islands, to do a series of letters reporting general conditions there. To his delight, they gave him the commission. He sailed March 7, 1866, arriving at Honolulu eleven days later, remaining in the islands four months—a wonderful golden experience which he always hoped some day to repeat.

In *Roughing It*, Mark Twain gives us a picture of the Sandwich Islands and a fairly correct history of his adventures there. Young and eager for adventure, he traveled widely on horseback and afoot—saw everything, did everything, and wrote it all for his paper.

In Mark Twain's scheme of life the right things seemed to come at the right time. Returning from a tour of all the islands, fairly worn out, and prostrated with saddle boils, he learned that the *Ajax* had arrived again, bringing His Excellency Anson Burlingame, lately appointed minister to China. Burlingame, on the way to his post, had with him his son Edward, a lively boy of eighteen, also General van Valkenburg, minister to Japan. Young Burlingame had read about Jim Smiley and the Jumping Frog, and was a Mark Twain enthusiast. Learning that the author was in Honolulu, laid up at his hotel, the party sent word that they would call on him next morning. Ill as he was, Clemens felt that he could not accept this honor. He crawled out of bed, dressed and shaved himself, and drove to the home of the American minister, where the party was staying. They had a hilariously good time. On breaking up, General van Valkenburg said to him:

"California is proud of Mark Twain, and some day the American people will be, too, no doubt."

On that very day, June 21, 1866, there came word of the arrival on one of the islands of an open boat containing fifteen starving sailors who had battled a stormy sea for forty-three days. They were from the

Hornet, that early in May had taken fire on the line and burned to the water's edge. Presently eleven of the rescued men were brought to Honolulu and placed in the hospital. Mark Twain recognized the great news importance of this event. A vessel for San Francisco would sail next morning. It was the opportunity of a lifetime; but to get the interviews and prepare the copy seemed beyond his strength.

At this critical moment the entire Burlingame party descended upon him, and a few moments later he was on the way to the hospital on a cot, escorted by the heads of the joint legations of China and Japan. Arriving there, Anson Burlingame, with his gentle manner and courtly presence, drew from those enfeebled castaways all the story of the burning vessel, their long privation and struggles that had stretched across four thousand miles of tossing sea. Mark Twain only had to listen and make the notes. He put in the night writing against time. Next morning, when the vessel was already drifting from the dock, a strong, accurate hand flung his bulky manuscript aboard and his great beat was sure. The three-column story on the front page of the *Sacramento Union*, July 19, 1866, gave the public its first story of the great disaster.

Samuel Clemens never ceased to love and honor Anson Burlingame, and he had a reason in addition to the one named. Burlingame one day said to him:

"You have great ability; I believe you have genius. What you need now is the refinement of association.

Refine yourself and your work. Never affiliate with inferiors; always climb."

To Mark Twain, advice like that coming from a man of Burlingame's endowments was a gospel which he would never forget. Burlingame encouraged him to travel—to visit him in Peking. He promised him letters of introduction and facilities in acquiring information about China. It is easy to understand that Mark Twain never felt his debt to Anson Burlingame entirely paid.

Clemens now returned to San Francisco, but the place no longer had any charm for him. In his notebook he wrote:

August 13, home again. No—not home again—in prison again, and all the wild sense of freedom gone. The city seems so cramped and so dreary with toil and care and business anxiety. God help me, I wish I were at sea again!

When they asked him at the office of the Sacramento *Union* what rate he wanted for the *Hornet* report, he said:

"Oh, I am a modest man; I don't want the whole *Union* office. Call it a hundred dollars a column."

The proprietors laughed, but the bill was made out at that figure. Many years afterward Mark Twain wrote:

The cashier didn't faint, but he came rather near it. He sent for the proprietors, and they only laughed in their jolly fashion, and said it was a robbery, but no matter, pay it. It's all right. The best men that ever owned a newspaper.

XV

MARK TWAIN, LECTURER—THE ROAD HOME

IT WAS not easy to take up the struggle again, but it was necessary. Clemens considered a variety of possibilities and prepared a *Hornet* article for *Harper's Magazine*. Its prompt acceptance pleased him mightily, but when the article appeared he found the printer had somehow converted his signature into "Mark Swain," a sad blow. He planned to deliver a Hawaiian lecture, but trembled at the thought. His Third House speech of two years before had been a fine success, but that had been given for a benefit. To offer himself as an entertainer for his own profit was quite a different matter. He confided his situation to a friend, Col. John McComb, of the *Alta California*, and was startled by his reply.

"Do it by all means," urged McComb. "It will be a grand success—I know it! Take the largest house in town and charge a dollar a ticket."

Under that vigorous stimulus Clemens hurried to the manager of the Academy of Music and engaged it for October 2d (1866). He knew the manager and obtained the house at half rates. He now sat down and prepared an advertisement, characteristically absurd, ending with the announcement:

Doors open at 7 o'clock. The trouble to begin at 8 o'clock,

Mark Twain said afterward that "trouble" was the right word, at least in the beginning. Entering by the stage door, the place seemed to him ominously silent; he had the feeling that it must be empty. Then from his concealment he stole a look and saw that it was packed. This was even worse. Sidling out from the wings, wabbly-kneed and dry of tongue, he was greeted by a murmur, a roar, a very crash of applause that frightened away his remaining courage. Then came reaction—these were his friends, and he began to talk to them. Fear melted away, and as the applause came in great waves that rose ever higher he knew something of the exultation of Monte Cristo when he declared, "The world is mine!"

It was a genuine triumph; his friends declared that no such lecture had ever been delivered. They praised his eloquence and humor to the skies. The morning papers called him "the most piquant and humorous writer and lecturer on the Coast, since the days of the lamented John Phoenix."

Mark Twain no longer hesitated as to immediate plans. He engaged Denis McCarthy, late of the *Enterprise*, as his manager, and they laid out a tour of the near-by towns in California, extending it to Carson City, Virginia City, and Gold Hill. It proved a happy excursion. Success traveled with them, whether the lecturer looked across the footlights of some pretentious "Opera House" or between the tallow candles of some camp "Academy."

Those who remember Mark Twain's lectures of that day say that his delivery was more quaint, his

drawl even more exaggerated, than in later life. They describe his movements as "natural rather than graceful," and recall that his manuscript, which he carried under his arm, looked like a ruffled hen.

Following custom, the lecturer at first thought it necessary to be introduced, and at each place McCarthy had to skirmish around and find the proper person. Some amusing incidents happened in this connection. Once Denis went down into the audience and captured an old miner, who ducked and dodged, but could not escape. When he managed to reach the stage he said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the celebrated Mark Twain, from the celebrated city of San Francisco, with his celebrated lecture about the celebrated Sandwich Islands."

Arriving at Virginia City, he met his old friend Joe Goodman; also Steve Gillis, who by this time was back on the *Enterprise*. Mark Twain had a fine audience in Virginia City, and another at Gold Hill, a few evenings later. Gold Hill was only a little way from Virginia City and Steve Gillis planned a great joke, to be played when the lecturer and his agent should come walking back by the lonely street that lay between the towns.

The joke this time was nothing less than highway robbery, and was duly carried into effect. Denis himself was made party to it, and with Mark Twain was duly held up by masked robbers, halfway between Gold Hill and Virginia City, and relieved of money, watches, and other personal effects. The story

is too long to tell here in detail,¹ but Mark Twain was pretty wrathful when he discovered that Gillis and McCarthy were responsible for the mock robbery. Goodman finally pacified him, but he said:

"Well, Joe, I'll let it pass—this time; I'll forgive them again; I've had to do it *so many* times; but if I *should see* Denis McCarthy and Steve Gillis *mounting the scaffold* to-morrow, and I could save them by turning over my hand, *I wouldn't do it.*"

The financial return from the lecture tour was considerable. San Francisco alone had paid him several hundred dollars, and the smaller places accordingly.

"What kind of a trip did you boys have?" a friend asked, upon the return of Denis and Clemens to San Francisco.

Clemens, just recovering from a cold, contracted the night of the robbery, smiled grimly:

"Oh, pretty good, only Denis here mistook it for a spree."

Having money, now, Mark Twain decided to visit his people as the first step in a journey which he meant to continue around the world. He had a commission from the *Alta California*, to send them letters, and was full of the prospect. He had been absent five and a half years—eventful, adventurous years that had made him over completely.

He returned by water—sailing from San Francisco by the way of Nicaragua.

In New York Clemens found Charles Henry Webb,

¹It will be found in full in *Mark Twain—A Biography*, by the same author.

who had put together a number of the Mark Twain sketches, including the "Jumping Frog," for book publication. Clemens himself took the manuscript to Carlton, who, it may be remembered, had turned the frog story over to the *Saturday Press*. But Carlton did not want any more books just then. Even the fame of the frog of Calaveras did not convince him. Twenty-one years later, in Switzerland, he said to Mark Twain:

"My chief claim to immortality is the distinction of having declined your first book."

Webb immediately set about publishing the book himself, and Clemens was soon with his mother and sister in St. Louis. Jane Clemens joked him, scolded him, and inquired searchingly into his habits. In turn he petted, comforted, and teased her. He was the same Sam, she said, and always would be. He made a trip to Hannibal, lectured there, and received a welcome that would have satisfied even Tom Sawyer. It was the same in Keokuk, after which he returned to St. Louis to plan his trip around the world.

But one day there he saw an announcement of the *Quaker City* Holy Land excursion and was carried away with the new idea in ocean travel. He made up his mind to join that splendid picnic to the shores of the Mediterranean.

His projected trip around the world seemed tame beside it. The company was to be a distinguished one. He at once wrote to the *Alta*, proposing that they send him as their correspondent. The fare was twelve hundred dollars and the *Alta* hesitated, but Colonel

John McComb, of that paper, insisted that the investment would be sound. The proposition was accepted, and Clemens, hurrying to New York, was met by the manager of the *Alta* Bureau in that city, with a telegram saying:

"Ship Mark Twain in Holy Land excursion and pay his passage."

Clemens had read that all applicants must be vouched for, as being proper persons to go in such distinguished company, and he had grave fears as to his acceptance. The *Alta* had applied for his passage, but that was all he knew. He went to the shipping office to see about it, and while waiting for attention heard a newspaper man inquire:

"What notables are going?"

A clerk with evident pride rattled off the names: "Lieutenant-General Sherman, Henry Ward Beecher, and Mark Twain." Which relieved his mind on that point. He was not only accepted, but starred as an attraction.

The *Quaker City* would not sail for two months yet, during which time Mark Twain was fairly busy. He wrote a number of letters to the *Alta*; his book, *The Jumping Frog and Other Sketches* appeared, and he delivered a Sandwich Island lecture at Cooper Union. He was at this time distinctly in the hands of his friends. Charles Henry Webb published his book, and Frank Fuller, who, as acting Governor of Utah, had known Mark Twain on the Comstock, arranged for the lecture.

The book appeared on the 1st of May, 1867. The

author had no great faith in it, though he seems to have been rather pleased with its appearance. To Bret Harte he wrote:

The book is out and it is handsome. It is full of damnable errors of grammar and deadly inconsistencies of spelling in the Frog Sketch, because I was away and did not read proofs; but be a friend and say nothing about these things. When my hurry is over, I will send you a copy to pisen the children with.

The little cloth-and-gold volume, so valued by collectors to-day, contained the frog story and twenty-six other sketches, some of which are still preserved in Mark Twain's collected works. It did not bring either fame or fortune to its author, but was by no means a failure.

The lecture was also, in its way, a success—certainly a dramatic one. Clemens had little faith in the project, knowing that his public in New York must be a very limited one. Fuller, however, was overflowing with enthusiasm and full of plans for disposing of the tickets. One of his schemes was a lot of little handbills hung in bunches in the street cars. The dangling clusters fascinated Mark Twain, and he haunted the cars to see if anybody else noticed them. Finally, after a long time, a passenger pulled off one of the tiny bills and glanced at it. A man with him asked:

“Who's Mark Twain?”

His companion answered: “God knows. I don't.”

The lecturer could not ride any farther. He hunted up his patron.

"Fuller," he groaned, "there isn't a sign—a ripple of interest."

Fuller assured him that everything was working all right—"working underneath," Fuller said. But the lecturer was without hope. He wrote home:

Everything looks shady, at least, if not dark. . . . After we have hired the Cooper Institute it comes out that I have got to play against Speaker Colfax at Irving Hall, Ristori, and also the double troupe of Japanese jugglers.

When the day of the lecture was near and only a few tickets had been sold, Clemens was desperate.

"Fuller," he said, "there'll be nobody in Cooper Union that night but you and me. I am on the verge of suicide. I would commit suicide if I had the pluck and the outfit. You must paper the house, Fuller."

"Very well," said Fuller. "What we want this time is reputation, anyway—money is secondary."

Fuller immediately sent out complimentary tickets to the school-teachers of New York and Brooklyn, to come free and hear Mark Twain's great lecture on Kanakadom. The lecturer had lost faith—he doubted that anybody would come to hear him, even on a free ticket. When the night arrived he drove with Fuller to Cooper Union half an hour before the lecture was to begin. Forty years later he said:

"I couldn't keep away. I wanted to see that vast mammoth cave and die. But when we got near the building I saw all the streets were blocked with people and that traffic had stopped. I couldn't believe that all these people were trying to get to the Cooper

Institute—but they were; and when I got to the stage at last, the house was jammed full—packed; there wasn't room enough left for a child.

"I was happy, and I was excited beyond expression. I poured the Sandwich Islands out on those people, and they laughed and shouted to my entire content. For an hour and fifteen minutes I was in Paradise."

His first sentence captured the audience, which from that moment to the end was either in a roar of laughter or held breathless by his descriptive passages. It was said that people were positively sick from laughing at that lecture.

The cash returns from the lecture did not equal the expenses. But Fuller insisted on making good the shortage. That was Fuller's regal way. His own return lay in the joy of the game and the winning of a larger stake for a friend. The papers spoke well of the lecture, and those who heard it spread its fame far and wide.

"Mark," said Fuller, "it's all right; the fortune didn't come, but it will. The fame has arrived. With this lecture, and your book just out, you are going to be the most-talked-of man in the country. Your letters for the *Alta* and the *Tribune* will get the widest reception of any letters of travel ever written."

In spite of his various successes and prospects, Samuel Clemens would seem to have been rather low in his mind at this period. The *Quaker City* was to sail June 8th. On the eve of departure he wrote his mother:

My mind is stored full of unworthy conduct toward Orion and toward you all, and an accusing conscience gives me peace only in excitement and restless moving from place to place. If I could only say I had done one thing for any of you that entitled me to your good opinions (I say nothing of your love, for I am sure of *that*, no matter how unworthy of it I may make myself—from Orion down, you have always given me that, all the days of my life, when God Almighty knows I have seldom deserved it), I believe I could go home and stay there—and I *know* I would care little for the world's praise or blame.

He spoke of the *Alta* letters as "the stupidest ever written from New York," declaring that correspondence had been a perfect drag. "If it continues abroad, I don't know what the *Tribune* and *Alta* folk will think."

Mark Twain always had these periods of depression, and doubtless the reflection that in his thirty-second year he was still without a settled profession or anchorage contributed to his mental unrest. In spite of Fuller's prophecy, we may believe he did not dream that the day of a great new beginning was at hand.

XVI

AN "INNOCENT" ABROAD

IT WAS a rainy afternoon when the *Quaker City* left the dock on that first great ocean picnic. The weather was too rough to venture outside with a lot of excursionists most of whom had never been to sea, so the vessel dropped down the harbor and anchored, sailing next morning to lands beyond the sunrise. In *The Innocents Abroad* Mark Twain has told us the story, and there is something dreamlike and beautiful in the tale that has never been matched in any other book of travel. The little group that collected around Mark Twain and traveled with him through France, Italy, and Greece, and across the baking hills of Judea, created realms of their own, and it is of these delectable lands that we read in *The Innocents Abroad*. "Dan" was Dan Slote, Mark Twain's room-mate; "Doctor" was Dr. A. Reeves Jackson, of Chicago; "Jack" was Jack Van Nostrand, of New Jersey; "Charlie" was Charles A. Langdon, of Elmira, New York, a boy of eighteen, whose sister would one day become Mark Twain's wife.

There were other pleasant people on the ship. There was the "Poet Lariat," who in real life was Bloodgood H. Cutter, a gentle eccentric from Long Island, and there was especially one middle-aged,

intellectual, motherly soul—Mrs. A. W. Fairbanks, of Cleveland, a correspondent for her husband's paper, the *Cleveland Herald*—who took an immediate interest in Samuel Clemens and his work. She encouraged him to read his letters aloud to her, offered suggestions for their refinement, gave him, in fact, precisely what he needed at this period—the uplifting association and example recommended by Anson Burlingame. There is the greatest difference between the style of those first *Quaker City* letters and anything he had previously written; we may believe that in a large measure it was due to this wise friend and counselor.

They were not a big party on the *Quaker City*—they numbered only sixty-seven. Their little vessel had only an eighteen-hundred-ton register, though a good enough ship, sizable for her time. A party such as that becomes presently like a big family, their affairs known to one another, their interests identical. It is quite certain that no such other party ever went for so long a voyage as that first little band of ocean wanderers.

The Innocents Abroad is very good history. The notes were made on the spot; the letters from which it was compiled were written when the incidents were fresh in the writer's mind. The adventures with Jack, Dan, and the Doctor happened substantially as recorded.

The old notebooks of the trip have survived, and it is curious to look through them to-day, trying to realize that these penciled memoranda were to grow

into the world's most delightful book of travel. They were to set down in the very midst of that care-free little company that frolicked through Italy and toiled wearily from Beirut to the shores of the Dead Sea, continuing still southward until they stood at last before the Sphinx, impressed and awed by its "five thousand slow-revolving years."

There is an incident of the *Quaker City* trip that finds no mention in *The Innocents Abroad*—the beginning of the author's life romance. Reference has already been made to young Charles Langdon, one of Mark Twain's admirers on the ship. The boy often invited Samuel Clemens to his stateroom, and on one of these occasions exhibited a dainty miniature of his sister Olivia, whose sweet and spiritual face made a deep impression on the older man. He looked at it with long admiration, spoke of it reverently, and each time he came, after that, asked to be allowed to see it. In his mind he dreamed he would one day meet the owner of that lovely face; he obtained from young Langdon a promise to invite him to the Elmira home.

The *Quaker City* returned to America November 19, 1867, after an absence of more than five months, and Mark Twain found himself, if not famous, at least in very wide repute. The fifty-three letters sent to the *Alta* and the half-dozen to the *New York Tribune* had carried his celebrity into every corner of the states and territories. Vivid, fearless, full of fresh color, humor, poetry, they came as a revelation to a public weary of the driveling, piety-mouthing letters of that period. They preached a new gospel

in travel literature; the gospel of truth—of according praise to whatever seemed genuine, and ridicule to the things considered sham. It was the gospel that Mark Twain would continue to preach during the rest of his career. It became his chief literary message to the world.

Arriving in New York, Clemens proceeded directly to Washington. He had agreed to accept a secretarial position with Senator Stewart of Nevada, believing that this would give him considerable leisure for his literary work. He had no need of such a position. Scarcely had he landed in America when he received invitations to lecture, at good prices, and to contribute articles to the newspapers and magazines.

About a week following his arrival in Washington the traveler received a letter which marked the beginning of one of the most notable publishing connections in American literary history. The letter was from Elisha Bliss, secretary of the American Publishing Company, of Hartford. Bliss proposed that Mark Twain collect his travel letters in a book, which the company would sell by subscription.

The proposition exactly fitted in with Mark Twain's plans. He replied at once, expressing himself as agreeable to the idea, and inquiring as to terms. In the end he went to Hartford, and concluded an arrangement with Bliss by which he was to have five per cent. royalty, a larger percentage than they were in the habit of paying on a subscription book. They had proposed a lump sum of ten thousand dollars, a great temptation, but partly through the advice of Henry Ward

Beecher, whose acquaintance Clemens made about this time, he closed on the royalty basis—"the best business judgment I ever displayed," he declared in later years.

Meantime, something of even greater importance had happened. Late in December, Samuel Clemens came over from Washington to New York and an evening or two later young Charles Langdon invited his distinguished *Quaker City* shipmate to meet his father and sister, who had arrived from Elmira and were stopping at the St. Nicholas Hotel. We may believe that Samuel Clemens went very willingly. The lovely face of the miniature, which he had first seen that day in the Bay of Smyrna, had become a part of his daydreams. For the first time now he looked upon the reality. Long afterward he said:

"It is forty years ago. From that day to this she has never been out of my mind."

Charles Dickens gave a reading that night at Steinway Hall. The Langdons went, and invited their guest. Clemens recalled afterward that Dickens wore a black velvet coat with a fiery-red flower in his buttonhole, and that he gave the storm scene from *Copperfield*—the death of James Steerforth. But he remembered still more clearly the face and dress of the slender, girlish figure at his own side.

Olivia Langdon at this time was twenty-two years old, rare and lovely as the miniature he had seen. The young girl was at first dazed and fascinated, rather than attracted, by this astonishing creature, so unlike anyone she had ever known. Her father, with a hearty

sense of humor and a keen perception of sincerity in men, accepted Samuel Clemens from the start.

Clemens saw Miss Langdon again within the week. On New Year's Day he set forth to pay calls, after the fashion of the time. Miss Langdon was receiving with a niece of Henry Ward Beecher at the home of a friend. Clemens and young Langdon decided to make this their first call. They arrived at eleven o'clock in the morning and did not leave until midnight.

Mark Twain returned to Washington, to his newspaper correspondence, and to begin the compilation of his book of travel. But then he received word from Joe Goodman that the *Alta* had copyrighted the *Quaker City* letters and proposed to bring them out in book form. Clemens confirmed this by telegraph, and sailed on the *Henry Chauncey*, arriving in San Francisco in April.

Matters in San Francisco turned out as he had hoped: the proprietors agreeing that they had already received good value for the money paid, the matter was settled with friendliness all around. On the 5th of May Clemens wrote to Bliss that he was progressing steadily with his manuscript, and expected to start East with it about the middle of June. He also wrote:

I lectured here on the trip [the *Quaker City* excursion] the other night. Over \$1600 in gold in the house; every seat taken and paid for before night.

Mark Twain now concluded to cover his lecture circuit of two years before. He needed the money

and friends urged him to make the venture. The tour was a great success. He closed it with a second lecture in San Francisco, an event announced with his customary drollery. On his bill he made it appear that the citizens of San Francisco had protested against his lecturing again and were insisting upon his return to New York. This he followed with the statement:

I will torment the people if I want to. . . . It only costs them \$1 apiece and if they can't stand it what do they stay here for?

Below this he printed other protests—one as coming from the clergy; also, the following:

You had *better* go.

Yours, CHIEF OF POLICE.

Mark Twain's farewell address, given at the Mercantile Library, July 2, 1868, remains one of the foremost literary and social events in San Francisco's history. Four days later he sailed on the steamer *Montana* to Acapulco, caught the *Henry Chauncey* at Aspinwall, reached New York on the 28th, and that day or the next delivered his manuscript into Bliss's hands.

He now heard some news: Bliss's directors, mostly of orthodox persuasion, had registered objections to the proposed book, which they believed was not likely to deal kindly with certain religious traditions. Bliss had promptly proposed to resign and publish the book himself—an alarming suggestion to the stockholders. The objectors retired, to be heard of no more.

XVII

A VISIT TO ELMIRA

OBTAINING a renewal of the invitation to visit the Langdon home, Samuel Clemens now set out for Elmira, and during a happy week enjoyed the hospitality of that charming household which included Olivia Langdon—Livy, as they called her. As yet, he had spoken no word of his love to the object of it, intending first to take her relatives into his confidence. When the day for his departure arrived he unbosomed himself to Charlie Langdon, much to the latter's alarm. The young man had the greatest admiration for the gifted author, but he did not welcome the idea of this eccentric soldier of letters becoming the life companion of his sister, whom he regarded as little less than a saint. Mark Twain had planned to go by an evening train. Langdon suggested something more immediate.

"Look here, Clemens," he said, when he recovered a little, "there is a train in half an hour; I'll help you to catch it. Don't wait till to-night; go now."

The other shook his head.

"No, Charlie," he said, in his gentle drawl, "I promise to be circumspect and I'll go to-night."

Fate always took care of Mark Twain. That night after dinner a light two-seated wagon was at

the gate, ready for the departing guest. Clemens and young Langdon occupied the rear seat, which for some reason had not been locked in its place. When the horse started, the two passengers, describing an arc, came down with some force on the cobbled street. They were not hurt, only dazed a little, and in the instant of recovery Mark Twain had an inspiration. As the Langdon family surrounded them he rose very feebly and had to be supported to the house. Remedies were hastily applied; Olivia Langdon showed special anxiety and attention. Of course he was not allowed to go, now. He was still there two weeks later, after which he made a trip to Cleveland to confide to Mrs. Fairbanks that he expected to win Livy Langdon for his wife.

Returning to Hartford to look after the progress of his book, he met for the first time the Rev. Joseph Hopkins Twichell, a man about his own age, athletic and handsome, pastor of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church. Ministers always got on well with Mark Twain. He and Twichell became friends from the first moment of their meeting, and remained so through life.

Hartford had a distinguished literary circle in those days, among its members, Charles Dudley Warner and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Twichell introduced him freely and Clemens would willingly have remained in that congenial atmosphere.

Business reasons made this impossible. James Redpath, of the Boston Lyceum Bureau, offered him

engagements for his new lecture, "The Vandal Abroad," and he was presently earning a hundred dollars or more a night and making most of the nights count.

Some of his engagements were in central New York not far from Elmira. He had a standing invitation to the Langdon home, and quite often made it convenient to be there, especially for the week-end. His courtship was not an unruffled one. Jervis Langdon admired him exceedingly; but annexing that vivid, volatile personality to his family was another matter. Clemens went to Cleveland to lecture and confided his troubles to Mrs. Fairbanks. It happened that in Cleveland he had a splendid success, news of which traveled quickly to Elmira. Two days later, in Pittsburgh, he "played" against Fanny Kemble, the favorite actress of that time, with the result that Miss Kemble had an audience of two hundred against nearly ten times that number who gathered to hear Mark Twain. On the second morning following, when the Langdon family were gathered at breakfast, a bushy, auburn head was poked fearfully in at the door and a low, humble voice said;

"The calf has returned. May the prodigal have some breakfast?"

There was only a provisional engagement at first. It was agreed between Samuel Clemens and Jervis Langdon that letters should be sent by Mr. Langdon to those who had known his would-be son-in-law. Mark Twain confidently enough gave him the names

of some San Francisco ministers with whom he had been on excellent terms. He also suggested that Mr. Langdon write to Joe Goodman, if he wanted to, but added that, as he had lied for Goodman a hundred times, Goodman in return would lie for him if necessary, so his testimony would be of no value. The letters were written, and as it would take a good while to receive the replies the lecturer had time to make an extended tour. Promptly upon his return he sought an interview with his prospective father-in-law. Mr. Langdon had rather a solemn look. Clemens asked:

"You've heard from those gentleman out there?"

"Yes, and from another gentleman I wrote concerning you."

"They don't appear to have been very enthusiastic from your manner."

"Well, yes, some of them were."

"I suppose I may ask what particular form their emotion took?"

"Oh, yes, yes! They agree unanimously that you are a brilliant, able man—a man with a future, and that you would make about the worst husband on record."

The applicant had a forlorn look. "There is nothing evasive about that."

Langdon reflected. "Haven't you any other friend that you could suggest?"

"Apparently none whose testimony would be valuable."

Jervis Langdon held out his hand. "You have at

least one," he said. "I believe in you. I know you better than they do."

The engagement of Samuel Langhorne Clemens and Olivia Lewis Langdon was ratified next day, February 4, 1869.

XVIII

A NEW BOOK, A NEW PAPER, AND A WEDDING

MARK TWAIN closed his lecture tour in March and went immediately to Elmira. He had earned something like eight thousand dollars, not a bad return for a first season on the circuit.

Final proofs of his book were coming now from Bliss, and he and Livy Langdon read them together. He realized presently that she had both literary perception and refined taste. She became, in fact, his editor during those happy courtship days—a position she held until her death. The world owes a large debt of gratitude to Mark Twain's wife, who from the very beginning—and always, so far as in her strength she was able—inspired him to give only his worthiest to the world.

In a letter to Bliss we get the first hint of the title of the new book, which was to be:

THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

OR

THE NEW PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

It was to have been issued in the spring, but it was not until July that the first copy was ready. It was a success from the start. More than five thousand

copies were disposed of in August, and thirty-one thousand had been sold by the first of the year. If Mark Twain was not already famous, he became unquestionably so now. The public acclaimed him as the greatest humorist of the age.

It is curious to reflect that Samuel Clemens still did not regard himself as a literary man. His thought was to own a paper, to settle himself in journalism. An opportunity came to acquire a third ownership in the Buffalo *Express*, and Mr. Langdon, anxious that this purchase should be concluded, provided a part of the funds. The new editor entered upon his duties in August, and in the issue of August 18th published a salutatory, in the course of which he said:

I am not going to hurt the paper deliberately and intentionally at any time. I am not going to introduce any startling reforms nor in any way attempt to make trouble. . . . I shall not often meddle with politics, because we have a political editor who is already excellent and only needs to serve a term or two in the penitentiary to be perfect.

He did not at once settle down to editorial work. His wedding day had been set for early in the year and he had agreed with Redpath to cover the lecture circuit during the winter. Redpath's lyceum headquarters were in Boston, and Clemens made his headquarters there, along with such congenial spirits as Josh Billings (Henry W. Shaw) and Petroleum V. Nasby (David R. Locke), popular lecturers of that day. It was during this period that he met one day, in the office of the *Atlantic Monthly*, William Dean Howells, at that time its assistant editor. The two

men were drawn to each other almost from the beginning, and in a little while were devoted friends.

Samuel Clemens and Olivia Langdon were married February 2, 1870, within two days of the anniversary of their engagement. A few days before the wedding Clemens wrote a long letter to Jim Gillis, out in the Tuolumne Hills, recalling their days at Angel's Camp and the absurd frog story, which he declared had been the beginning of his good fortune.

It had been only five years before, that day in Angel's Camp, but how far away it seemed to him now!

Clemens received an invitation to lecture on the night of February 2d. He replied that he was sorry to disappoint the applicant but was obliged to do so, for on that evening he was going to marry a young lady, and that he would rather marry that young lady than to deliver all the lectures in the world.

On the morning of the wedding day Mark Twain received from his publishers a royalty check of four thousand dollars, the accumulation of three months' sales, a cheerful beginning. The wedding was a home affair. The Rev. Joseph H. Twichell and Harmony, his wife, came over from Hartford; Twichell to assist the Rev. Thomas K. Beecher in performing the ceremony. Jane Clemens could not come, nor Orion. But Pamela, a widow now, and her daughter Annie, a young lady, arrived from St. Louis. About one hundred guests collected in the Langdon parlors, those quiet, stately rooms that

were to hold so much of his history—so much of the story of life and death—that now made its beginning there. It was at seven in the evening that they were married. The bride danced with her father, and Mr. Beecher reported, at the meeting which he attended later, that she was very beautiful and wore the longest white gloves he had ever seen; he declared they reached to her shoulders.

On the following afternoon the wedding party set out for Buffalo. Through a Mr. Slee, Mr. Langdon's agent in that city, Clemens had engaged, as he supposed, accommodations in an unpretentious boarding house.

It was nine o'clock at night when the party reached Buffalo and found Mr. Slee waiting at the station with sleighs to convey them to the "boarding house" he had selected. They started, and the sleigh containing the bride and groom soon fell behind and drove about rather aimlessly, apparently going nowhere in particular. This disturbed the groom a good deal, for he thought it proper that they should arrive first, to receive their guests. When at last they turned into Delaware Avenue, Buffalo's finest street, and stopped before one of the most attractive residences, he was troubled concerning the richness of the locality.

They were on the steps when the doors opened, and a perfect fairyland of lights and decorations was revealed within. The friends who had gone ahead came out with greetings to lead in the bride and groom. Servants stepped forward to take their bags and wraps. They were ushered inside; were led

through beautiful rooms all newly painted and garnished. The bridegroom was dazed, unable to understand the meaning of it all. At last his young wife put her hand upon his arm.

"Don't you understand, Youth?" she said (that was always her name for him). "Don't you understand? It is ours, all ours—everything—a gift from Father."

But even then he could not grasp it; not at first; not until Mr. Langdon brought a little box and, opening it, handed them the deeds. Nobody quite remembers what was the first remark that Samuel Clemens made, but either then or a little later he said:

"Mr. Langdon, whenever you are in Buffalo, if it's twice a year, come right here. Bring your bag and stay overnight, if you want to. It sha'n't cost you a cent."

XIX

THE YEAR AT BUFFALO—THE NEW BOOK— QUARRY FARM

BUFFALO was no place for Mark Twain, and he presently found it out. He was already much more than a mere journalist—he was an author of world size; his place was among men of his own caliber and kind.

That he worked hard there is plenty of evidence. His hours were not regular, but they were long. Often he was at his desk at eight in the morning and remained there until ten or eleven at night. In addition he undertook a department for a new magazine, the *Galaxy*, for which he was to write several pages of miscellany each month under the general head of "Memoranda." It was an independent, go-as-you-please department, filled with comment, criticism, sketches humorous and otherwise, according to the author's fancy. Neither the work in the *Galaxy* nor the *Express* represented Mark Twain at his best. He was working under difficulties.

Jervis Langdon was never able to accept his son-in-law's playful invitation to visit him. His health failed that spring, and after a trip to the South he returned to Elmira to die. Mrs. Clemens, who adored her father, hurried to his bedside, and her husband

presently followed. They nursed him night and day, but early in August the end came. It was the beginning of a series of disasters. Mrs. Clemens, worn by the strain of watching, and bowed by her father's death, invited an old school friend, Miss Emma Nye, to visit her. Miss Nye had hardly arrived when she was stricken with typhoid fever. Now followed another long vigil of anxiety and nursing, ending with the death of the visitor. The young wife was by this time in very delicate health. Another friend came to cheer her, and Mrs. Clemens drove to the railway station—a hurried trip over rough cobbled streets. She was prostrated on her return, and a little later, November 7, 1870, a baby boy, Langdon, was prematurely born. A dangerous illness of both mother and child followed. One may easily imagine that Mark Twain found it difficult to keep up his humorous writing under conditions like these.

Bliss wanted another book and during the early days of Mr. Langdon's illness journeyed to Elmira to arrange the matter. Clemens signed the contract, and began the story of his Western adventures, but had neither the time nor the spirit to continue. Discouraged, he agreed with Mrs. Clemens to dispose of their Buffalo interests at the first opportunity and find a home elsewhere. He gave up the *Galaxy* department and sold his interest in the *Express*, glad to be rid of it at any price. Then with the first spring days he carried Mrs. Clemens and little Langdon to a hilltop above Elmira, Quarry Farm, the home of her sister, Mrs. Theodore Crane. It was a

beautiful spot overlooking the Chemung River, an ideal place for summertime. The air and quiet rest proved beneficial to the invalids. Mark Twain resumed work on his new book.

The result did not satisfy him. He feared he had got out of the old swing. Joe Goodman on his way East dropped off at Elmira, and Mark Twain hurried him to the farm. Scarcely had they reached there when the author, explaining his anxiety, put the first chapters of the manuscript into the visitor's hands. Seating himself by a window, Goodman began to read deliberately and critically. He did not know that Clemens was watching him until suddenly the latter exclaimed:

"I knew it! I knew it! I am writing nothing but rot! You have sat there all this time, reading without a smile and pitying the ass I am making of myself. But I am not wholly to blame. I am not strong enough to write against fate. I have been trying to write a funny book, with dead people and sickness everywhere. Oh, Joe, I wish to God I could die, myself!"

"Mark," said Goodman, "I was reading critically, not for amusement, and so far as I have read and can judge, this is one of the best things you have ever written. I have found it perfectly absorbing. You are doing a great book."

Clemens knew that Goodman never spoke idly and in a moment was all enthusiasm. He offered to pay Goodman a salary to keep him company and furnish him inspiration. Goodman remained without

salary, and the two took long walks together, recalling old Comstock days, sometimes visiting the unused quarry for which the farm had been named to collect geological specimens. Many of the best chapters of *Roughing It* came out of those walks. In May Clemens wrote Bliss that he had twelve hundred manuscript pages of the new book completed and was turning out copy at the rate of from thirty to sixty-five pages daily. He had now the greatest hopes for the book. In his letter he said:

When I get it done I want to see the man who will begin to read it and not finish it. Nothing grieves me now; nothing troubles me, nothing bothers me or gets my attention. I don't think of anything but the book, and don't have an hour's unhappiness about anything, and don't care two cents whether school keeps or not.

He reconsidered his resolution not to lecture again. Selling the paper at a loss had left him financially cramped, and lecturing offered the quickest relief. He prepared a lecture on Artemus Ward, another on pleasant characters he had met, and a third based on chapters of the new book.

"During July I'll decide which one I like best," he wrote Redpath, and cautioned him not to make engagements for lectures in churches. "I never made a success of a lecture in a church yet. People are afraid to laugh in a church."

Meantime Hartford had been selected by Mr. and Mrs. Clemens as their place of residence. They felt that they could not go back to their house in Buffalo, and they presently disposed of it. Both of

them had pleasant acquaintances in Hartford. The fine Hooker house on Forest Street was leased; the Buffalo house was closed. In the year and a half of their occupancy it had seen well-nigh all the round of life. This was in the autumn of 1871.

Mark Twain lectured pretty steadily that winter, and was a good deal with the Boston group, which included Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Howells, also Bret Harte, who by this time had made his regal progress across the country and was in the splendid morning of his fame. Of the three lectures which Clemens had written he found that the chapters from *Roughing It* gave the best entertainment. He had full houses everywhere, and before the end of the season had straightened out his financial difficulties. As usual, he was sick of the platform, anxious for the season to end. He telegraphed Redpath at the end of February:

If I had another engagement I would rot before I would fill it.

Proofs of the new book had been following him, and in February, *Roughing It* was ready to be issued from the press. Its advance sale had been large and Mark Twain resolved in future to confine himself strictly to the trade of authorship. If he only could have held to that resolution, what sorrow and trouble he would have saved himself in the days to come!

Roughing It in a different way is quite as remarkable as *The Innocents Abroad*. If it has less charm, it has a more direct interest, and it is certainly not

without charm. It was accepted by the public for just what it was and is—a great picture of the overland pioneer days, a period now forever gone. Its sale was immediate and satisfactory, aggregating about forty thousand copies during the first three months.

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XX

A TRIP TO ENGLAND—"THE GILDED AGE"

THE year of 1872 proved an eventful one for Mark Twain. In March his second child, a little girl named Olivia Susan, for her mother and aunt, was born. Three months later, in Hartford, little Langdon Clemens died. Frail from the beginning, he had been unable to survive a heavy cold ending with an attack of diphtheria.

Clemens did but little work, though he managed to invent a self-pasting scrapbook, and began a first draft of *Tom Sawyer*, apparently planned in dramatic form. But just then he conceived the notion of writing a book on England, and as he wished to make the experiment of English copyright for *Roughing It*, he decided to sail at once on this double errand. He gave out no word of the book and soon abandoned the idea. He made a quantity of notes, filling several stylographic notebooks, but none of the matter was ever used.

Probably he intended to write something in the nature of a humorous satire of English life, but found English society quite different from his expectations. In the first place, they at once made a lion of him, flocking about him as if he had been a visiting ruler,

Never at home had he received such attentions. Howells has written:

In England rank, fashion, and culture rejoiced in him. Lord Mayors, Lord Chief Justices, and magnates of many kinds were his hosts; he was desired in country houses, and his bold genius captivated the favor of periodicals that spurned the rest of our nation.

He found, too, that English home life was a substantial and altogether an admirable institution, that English culture and social customs furnished examples to be followed rather than satirized. There was, indeed, nothing for him to make a book—his kind of a book—out of. All his impressions of England were happy ones. England even sustained his copyright on *Roughing It*, though certainly the law at this time was not very clearly defined. He was urged to lecture, but declined to do so, promising, however, to return the following year.

A number of amusing incidents are related of his London sojourn. Once at a banquet, when the list of distinguished names was being read and the diners were applauding, he was conversing with a friend at his side, joining in the applause without listening, accordingly as the others led. Finally a name was announced which was followed by a great outburst of handclapping. Mark Twain, not to be outdone in his approval, stoutly kept his hands going when all the others had finished. Then of his neighbor he asked:

“Whose name was that we were just applauding?”

“Mark Twain’s.”

But they took it as one of his jokes. Whatever he did or said they found highly amusing. On another occasion a speaker humorously referred to his American habit of carrying a cotton umbrella. His reply, that he carried a cotton umbrella because it was the only kind that an Englishman wouldn't steal, traveled all over England next day as one of the finest examples of modern repartee. To his mother he wrote:

I came here to take notes for a book, but I haven't done much but attend dinners and make speeches. I've had a jolly good time, and I do hate to go away from these English folk; they make a stranger feel entirely at home and they laugh so easily that it is a comfort to make after-dinner speeches here.

He sailed for home November 12th, on the *Batavia*, loaded with Christmas presents for everybody: jewelry, furs, laces, even a practical steam-engine for his little namesake, Pamela's son, Samuel Moffett.

Clemens had no intention of ever lecturing again, and refused the offers that Redpath regularly sent him. His success in England had added largely to his prestige at home. He was not yet the foremost American author, but undoubtedly he had become the most popular. Edwin Whipple wrote:

Mark Twain is regarded chiefly as a humorist, but the exercise of his real talents would rank him with the ablest of our authors in the past fifty years.

It was during this winter (1872-73) that the Clemens household enjoyed its first real home life in Hartford—its first real home life anywhere since those

earliest months of marriage. Clemens himself was at home, and the family health was comparatively good. Their house was in a literary neighborhood, that corner of Hartford then known as "Nook Farm." The Warners, the Stowes, and other congenial spirits lived near by.

One night when Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dudley Warner were dining with Mr. and Mrs. Clemens there rose a lively discussion concerning recently published novels. The two husbands were inclined to criticize the books in which their wives were finding pleasure, whereupon the wives promptly suggested that their husbands produce better ones. This being somewhat in the nature of a challenge, it was promptly accepted as such—mutually accepted; that is to say, in partnership. Clemens and Warner declared that they would do a novel together, and would begin it forthwith. Next day Mark Twain was hard at work on the first chapters of *The Gilded Age*. Already he had the beginning of a story in his mind, but had been unwilling to undertake a work of fiction alone. His purpose was to write a tale around his mother's cousin, James Lampton—to let that gentle visionary stand as the central figure against a proper background.

He worked with enthusiasm and finished the first eleven chapters in a comparatively brief time. These he read aloud to Warner, who took up the tale at this point and began to inject new characters and romance through the next twelve chapters. So they worked alternately "in the superstition," as Mark Twain

once declared, “that we were writing one coherent yarn, when I suppose, as a matter of fact, we were writing two *incoherent* ones.”

The book begun in February was finished in April, and the result, if not highly artistic, was astonishingly good reading. Mark Twain’s part in it will stand with some of his best work. The character of Colonel Sellers has taken its place as a figure in American development. His saying, “There’s millions in it,” has passed into the language.

XXI

BACK IN LONDON AGAIN—TOM SAWYER—A NEW HOME

MR. AND MRS. CLEMENS decided to make Hartford their permanent home. They bought a plot of land on Farmington Avenue, still nearer to their literary neighbors, and set about plans for building. In May, when the new house was well started, they left it in the hands of the architect and builder, and with Miss Clara Spaulding, a girlhood friend of Mrs. Clemens, and little Susy, now something more than a year old, they sailed for England, on a long holiday.

Whatever honors Mark Twain may have received on his first trip to England, they were doubled now. His rooms at the Langham Hotel were like a court. Robert Browning, Turgenev, Sir John Millais, Lord Houghton, and Sir Charles Dilke were among those who called to pay their respects. Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, and other popular novelists of that day haunted the Langham, fascinated by Mark Twain's personality and story-telling. Reade invited him to collaborate on a novel.

The excitement and demands of London life told on Mrs. Clemens. She delighted in the cordial English hospitality, but her endurance was limited. Near the end of July they canceled all social engagements and

took refuge in Edinburgh, at Veitch's family hotel in George Street. Here she had a collapse of strength that required the attention of a physician. Clemens, unacquainted with Edinburgh, remembered only that Dr. John Brown, who had written *Rab and His Friends*, lived there. Learning the address, he walked round to 23 Rutland Street and introduced himself. Doctor Brown came at once, and Mrs. Clemens promptly improved under his treatment.

The acquaintance did not end there. For nearly a month the creator of "Rab" called daily and the members of the two families became the closest friends. Little Susy, whom he called "Megalopis" because of her wonderful eyes, became his special playmate. The Clemens family often joined Doctor Brown in his professional rounds. He was beloved by everyone and especially by all dogs, of whom he was the chief protector.

Edinburgh had its social affairs, too, though very quiet ones. On her recovery Mrs. Clemens made friends and memories that remained always very dear to her. In a letter to her sister, August 24th:

We leave Edinburgh to-morrow, with sincere regret; we have had such a delightful stay here—we do so regret leaving Dr. Brown and his sister, thinking we shall probably never see them again.

Mark Twain remembered his promise to lecture in London, and on October 13, 1873, appeared in the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, and delivered "Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands." The papers heralded the event and the

house was packed. The lecturer appeared on the platform, with no one to introduce him. He began apologetically by saying that Mr. Clemens had fully expected to be present. Many of the audience thought it was the manager and loud murmurs arose. The lecturer lifted his hand and added, "I am happy to say that Mark Twain is present and will now give his lecture." Whereupon the audience recovered and roared its approval.

For five successive nights and a Saturday matinée the culture and fashion of London thronged to hear him discourse of their "Fellow Savages." Nothing of the kind had happened in London before. The papers for a week devoted columns of space to appreciation and editorial comment. On no occasion in his own country had his triumph been so complete.

But it was only a beginning. Three days following his lecture course he sailed with his little family for America, then promptly returned alone, and was back in London, lecturing again, after barely a month's absence. For two months he filled the big Hanover Square room, giving for the most part his *Roughing It* lecture. It was only toward the end of this record engagement that the audience showed any signs of diminishing.

Mark Twain returned to America at the end of January, 1874, and was immediately besieged by Redpath to make the lecture circuit. He vowed that he would never start on another tour, but yielded to

the extent of giving a lecture here and there. Finally he telegraphed to his tormentor:

Why don't you congratulate me? I never expect to stand on a lecture platform again after Thursday night.

Howells and Aldrich came over from Boston for a visit, and with Twichell and Charles Dudley Warner two happy days and evenings passed—"days," says Howells, "such as the aging sun no longer shines on in his round."

The new house was coming along well, but would not be ready before autumn. Leaving it once more in the hands of the builders, the owners went to Quarry Farm, and in a cozy little study which Mrs. Crane had built for him on the hillside Mark Twain began a story which he had been planning for some time, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The study was an inspiring place and he worked well and rapidly. To Twichell he wrote of his new retreat:

It is the loveliest study you ever saw. It is octagonal, with a peaked roof, each face filled with a spacious window, and it sits perched in complete isolation on the top of an elevation that commands leagues of valley and city and retreating ranges of distant blue hills.

He did not work steadily on the Tom Sawyer book; perhaps he ran out of incident, or it may be that other subjects furnished a sharper interest. He did some short sketches, one of which, "A True Story Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It"—a story really

told to him by Mrs. Crane's cook, "Auntie Cord"—was taken by Howells for the *Atlantic Monthly*—Mark Twain's first acceptance by that magazine.

It also happened that summer that a California writer named Densmore produced a play founded on *The Gilded Age*, with John T. Raymond in the part of Colonel Sellers. Clemens had already planned to write a play around the character of Colonel Sellers and had taken out dramatic copyright. He therefore stopped the California production, wrote the dramatist a friendly letter, and in the end bought the play of him. He now rewrote it, enlarging upon the scenes to bring out the character of Sellers. Raymond, who had demonstrated his power in the part, came on, and a contract was closed with him for its production. It proved a great success and Raymond played it for several years. As a dramatic composition its rank was not high, but the character of Sellers himself made a strong human appeal. He became as popular on the stage as he had been in the book, and returned a large profit both to actor and to dramatist.

The new house in Hartford was not quite ready when its owners returned, but they moved into such portions of it as were available, and little by little extended their occupation, until at last the workmen were gone and the handsome furnishings were in place.

It was quite a wonderful house. It stood on the edge of a shady slope that fell away to a quiet stream. Its architecture in no way resembled the big square Hartford mansions of the period. There were bal-

conies and wings and gables; also an immense veranda that at one end looked down the shaded slope.

It was filled with beautiful things. Mrs. Clemens had bought freely during her stay in Europe, and had excellent taste in the matter of furnishings. In the library was an old carved mantel, picked up in Scotland, salvage from a ruined castle. Across the top of the fireplace was a brass plate with the motto, "The ornament of a house is the friends that frequent it"—surely never more appropriately inscribed.

Many visitors have tried to express the charm of Mark Twain's home. Howells assures us that there never was another like it, and we may accept his statement. Mark Twain was not responsible for this condition; it was around his wife that its affairs steadily revolved. In the four and a half years of their marriage Olivia Clemens had become something more than the half-timid, inexperienced girl of her wedding day. In spite of her delicate physique and her uncertainty of health, she capably undertook the management of this large new house and supervised its economies. No children had more careful training than hers, no household was ever directed with a sweeter and gentler grace or with greater perfection of detail. When distinguished visitors came to seek out America's most picturesque literary figure she gave welcome to them all, and filled her place at his side with such sweet and capable dignity that those who came to pay their duties to him often returned to offer even greater devotion to his companion. Says Howells:

She was, in a way, the loveliest person I have ever seen—the gentlest, the kindest, without a touch of weakness; she united wonderful tact with wonderful truth, and Clemens not only accepted her rule implicitly, but he rejoiced, he gloried in it.

And again Howells wrote:

Marriages are what the parties to them alone really know them to be, but from the outside I should say that this marriage was one of the most perfect.

LIBRARY OF
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XXII

THE WALK TO BOSTON, AND "OLD TIMES ON THE
MISSISSIPPI"—HUCK FINN

IN THOSE days when the Rev. Joseph Twichell and Mark Twain were young men they were fond of taking long walks—excursions filled with pleasant talk that covered all the range of human possibility. They talked so continuously that they scarcely noticed the distance, and one day decided that they could quite easily walk from Hartford to Boston, a distance of about a hundred miles.

They grew enthusiastic over the idea, and one morning in November took the road—Twichell carrying a little bag and Clemens a basket of lunch. It turned out to be a good day for walking; by evening they had reached Westford, a distance of twenty-eight miles. The tour may be said to have ended there. After an uneasy night, Clemens awoke exceedingly lame and footsore. Stimulated by Twichell, he limped and swore six miles farther to North Ashford then gave it up. He telegraphed Redpath of their approach:

We have made thirty-five miles in less than five days. This demonstrates that the thing can be done. Shall now finish by rail. Did you have any bets on us?

Word was also sent to Howells, who prepared for them at his home. In his book, *My Mark Twain*, he tells us:

I can see him now as he stood up in the midst of our friends, with his head thrown back, and in his hand a dish of those scalloped oysters without which no party in Cambridge was really a party, exulting in the tale of his adventure, which had abounded in the most original characters and amusing incidents at every mile of their progress.

Howells at this time was urging Mark Twain to do some extended feature for the *Atlantic*, or at least something for the January number. Clemens had about given up the thought, when it happened, soon after their return to Hartford, that during one of their walks together he related to Twichell something of his piloting days. Home from the walk, he wrote Howells:

I take back the remark that I can't write for the January number, for Twichell and I have had a long walk in the woods, and I got to telling him about old Mississippi days of steam-boating glory and grandeur as I saw them (during four years) *from the pilot house*. He said, "What a virgin subject to hurl into a magazine." I hadn't thought of that before. Would you like a series of papers to run through three months or six or nine—or about four months, say?

Howells joyfully accepted the proposed series. Clemens did not delay his first article, and upon its arrival Howells wrote that it made the water in his ice pitcher muddy to read it.

Those early Mississippi chapters contain some of Mark Twain's very best writing. He knew the subject

so well, and loved it so much. When the first number appeared in the *Atlantic*, John Hay wrote the author: “It is perfect; no more nor less. I don’t see how you do it.”

The papers ran through seven numbers of the *Atlantic* and added materially to their author’s literary fame. They were everywhere reprinted by the newspapers, and pirated in book form by a Canadian publisher. The author himself did not include them in a volume until many years later.

Clemens bought a typewriter on the trip to Boston, the first one he had ever seen. It was a primitive affair—its type all capitals. But he was fascinated by it and put in a good deal of time writing letters to friends, for practice. Some of the Mississippi chapters were copied on it.

But it did not stay in order. The keys had a way of sticking and he declared it was ruining his morals. He finally gave it to Howells, because “Howells had no morals, anyway.”

That was a busy summer for Mark Twain. He had renewed work on the Tom Sawyer book, which he brought to a finish early in July. He was in Hartford at this time, and wrote to Howells:

I have finished the story and didn’t take the chap beyond boyhood. . . . If I went on now and took him into manhood, he would lie, like all the one-horse men in literature, and the reader would conceive a hearty contempt for him.

He added that it was not a boy’s book at all. A view with which Howells did not in the least agree. The latter wrote:

It is altogether the best story I ever read. It will be an immense success, but I think you ought to treat it explicitly *as* a boy's story; grown-ups will enjoy it just as much if you do, and if you should put it forth as a study of boy character from the grown-up point of view you give the wrong key to it.

The book was not published until something more than a year later, December, 1876. It made an immediate hit with readers of all ages.

Clemens went frequently to Cambridge where the Howells home was always waiting for him and was promptly adjusted to his requirements without regard to its former routine. Clemens would take a room at the Parker House and perhaps dress for dinner, to arrive later at Cambridge in evening dress and slippers, joyously remaining with them for a day or more in that guise, putting on an overcoat and a pair of rubbers when he went out for a walk. Also, he smoked continuously in every room of the house—smoked during every waking moment—and Howells, mindful of his insurance, sometimes slipped in and removed the still-burning cigar, after he was asleep. He was a perpetual joy to the Howells family when he was there, even though the household required a general reorganization when he was gone. Mildred Howells remembers how, as a very little girl, she was cautioned by her mother not to ask for anything she wanted at the table when company was present, but to speak privately of it to her. Miss Howells declares that while Mark Twain was their guest she nearly starved, because it was impossible to get her mother's attention, and

Mrs. Howells, after one of those visits of hilarity and disorder, said, "Well, it most kills me, but it pays," a remark which Clemens himself vastly enjoyed.

Howells once wrote to him:

Your visit was a perfect ovation for us; we *never* enjoy anything so much as those visits of yours. The smoke and the Scotch and the late hours almost kill us; but we look each other in the eyes when you are gone, and say what a glorious time it was, and air the library, and begin sleeping and longing to have you back again.

Most of the summers Mark Twain spent at Quarry Farm. There were two little girls now, Susy and Clara, and the farm was a lovely place for them. It had plenty of animals, and a wide, safe, grassy expanse before the house, for a playground. Once Clemens wrote to Doctor Brown, that they went to Elmira to be "hermits and eschew caves and live in the sun." Mark Twain did most of his writing in Elmira. He found the little octagonal study, built for him by Mrs. Crane, an inspiring place, and here, in 1876, he made a beginning on a book which was to supplement *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*—*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

He had no great faith in his beginning. In a letter of that time he wrote, "I like it only tolerably well, as far as I have gone, and may possibly pigeon-hole or burn the manuscript when it is done"—this of the story which, of his books of pure fiction, will perhaps longest survive. He gave up the effort,

presently, with the tale about half completed, and let it lie unfinished for years. Clearly he was not in the mood.

That winter Bret Harte came to Hartford, and they wrote a play together. It was constructed around a Chinese character to be played by Charles Parsloe, famous in such parts. They called the play "Ah Sin" and they had a very good time writing it, though Clemens and Harte were not as congenial as in their pioneer days. Success had not been good for Harte. It had disturbed his general psychology; some of his habits were open to criticism. "Ah Sin" proved only a partial success. It pleased a number of people very much. But it did not please enough people to warrant its continued production. It was tried in Washington, in New York, and later on the road, but was eventually abandoned to its fate and heard of no more.

Mark Twain did not give up the playwriting idea, and for a number of years was generally working at some dramatic composition or other, but without much success. He did not have the trick of playwriting. It was just at this time, however, that he began work on a story full of dramatic possibilities.

One day, among the books at Quarry Farm, he came upon a little juvenile volume by Charlotte M. Yonge, entitled *The Prince and the Page*. It was the story of a prince, disguised as a blind beggar through a period of years. Reading it, Mark Twain developed an idea for a tale of his own. Not only would he have a prince in the guise of a beggar, but a beggar in the guise of a prince. He would have them change places

in the world and each learn the burden of the other's life.

He began work immediately, finding some difficulty at first in selecting his hero. Originally his idea had been to use the late King Edward VII at about fifteen, but found that he could not convincingly lose a prince among the slums of modern London and have his proud estate denied and jeered at by the mob. So he followed back through history, looking for the proper time and prince, until he came to little Edward Tudor, son of Henry VIII. The little prince was really too young, but no matter, he would do.

His original thought had been to write a play, but then he decided to begin his new venture in story form. He put away all thought of everything cheap and modern, steeped himself in the period of his story, and began one of the loveliest tales ever written of old English life. He finished about four hundred pages of the manuscript that summer (1877), then, as the inspiration seemed to lag, put it aside, as was his habit, until his interest in the theme should be renewed. He did not touch the story again for more than two years.

XXIII

AN ENTERTAINER AT HOME—TRAMPING WITH TWICHELL

TEN years earlier, when Mark Twain had first lectured in New York City, at the Cooper Union, the cartoonist, Thomas Nast, whose pictures were then coming into notice, proposed to him that they undertake a lecture tour together—Clemens to speak and Nast simultaneously to illustrate with quick sketches. At the time Mark Twain had been unable to enter into such an arrangement. Now, however, he wrote Nast proposing a joint tour.

MY DEAR NAST:

I did not think I should ever stand on a platform again until the time was come for me to say "I die innocent." But the same old offers keep arriving. I have declined them all, just as usual, though sorely tempted, as usual. . . .

. . . I now propose to you what you proposed to me in 1867, ten years ago (when I was unknown)—*viz.*, that you stand on the platform and make pictures, and I stand by you and black-guard the audience. I should enormously enjoy meandering around (to big towns—don't want to go to little ones), with you for company.

My idea is not to fatten the lecture agents and lyceums on the spoils, but to put all the ducats religiously into two equal piles and say to artist and lecturer, "Absorb these."

It was a long letter containing a full plan and a possible list of cities to be visited, with estimated

receipts. But Nast had been lecturing on his own account, and, though successful, had acquired a strong distaste for the platform. He declined, and Clemens was not greatly disappointed. He cared too much for his fireside where he was always sure of an audience. When friends were not there he still had little Clara and Susy, the most devoted and attentive listeners in the world. They had learned his gift as a romancer and assisted by furnishing subjects. They would bring him a picture, requiring him to invent a story for it without a moment's delay. On one side of the library, along the bookshelves that joined the mantelpiece, were numerous ornaments and pictures. At one end was the head of a girl that they called "Emeline," and at the other was an oil painting of a cat. When other subjects failed, the romancer was obliged to build a story impromptu, beginning with the cat, working along through the bric-à-brac, and ending with Emeline. He could vary the *story* as much as he liked. In fact, he was required to do that, but the literary path from the cat to Emeline must be duly followed, and the romancer remembered it his life long.

Clemens had a luxurious study in the new house but gave it up for a playroom, transferring his writing quarters to the billiard room at the top of the house. When his work did not go well he could knock the balls about for inspiration. When callers came he received them there and impressed them into the game.

Mark Twain was an inveterate billiard player to

almost the last days of his life. In those Hartford years there was a group who came regularly each Friday evening. They played late, but never late enough for him. He seemed never to be tired; he would go on playing till the last man gave out from sheer weariness; then he would still go on knocking the balls about, alone. He liked to invent new games, and new rules for old games, often inventing a rule on the spur of the moment to fit some particular shot or position on the table. It amused him highly to do this and to pretend deep indignation when his opponents disqualified his ruling and rode him down.

Mark Twain had published no important book recently, and had apparently lost interest in his two unfinished manuscripts of value, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Huckleberry Finn*. His publishers were especially anxious for another book of travel. Clemens and his wife finally decided to take up European residence for a year or more, to give the children the advantage of the German language, then very popular, and to obtain material for a new book. They began the study of German at home, and in April, 1878, sailed on the *Holsatia* for Hamburg, with Bayard Taylor and Murat Halstead as fellow travelers. Taylor was on his way to his post as minister to Germany. Halstead had come down the bay to bid a last farewell to his wife and daughter, passengers on the *Holsatia*, but had somehow managed to get overlooked and suddenly found himself on his way across the ocean with a very scanty wardrobe indeed.

Arriving at Hamburg, the Clemens party pro-

ceeded to Heidelberg and were presently established at the beautiful Schloss Hotel, with wonderful glassed-in observation perches, commanding views of Heidelberg castle, the city below, the densely wooded hills, the far-flowing Neckar, and the mist-haunted valley of the Rhine. Clemens wrote enthusiastically to Howells of the situation, and presently sent a letter to the Rev. Joe Twichell, naming a date when Twichell should join him in Germany and become his guest on a walking tour, during which, as he expressed it, he would "dig material enough out of Joe to make it a sound investment." As a matter of fact, he loved Twichell's companionship and was always inviting him to share his journeys—to Boston, to Bermuda, to Washington—wherever interest or fancy led him.

The plan for the walking tour had been partly arranged before the departure from Hartford. Twichell, now receiving the confirming news, wrote that it was a great day for him—that his third son had been happily born early that morning, and now this glorious gift of a tramp through Germany and Switzerland completed his blessings.

I am almost too joyful for pleasure. I labor with my felicities. How I shall get to sleep to-night I don't know, though I have had a good start in not having slept much last night. Oh, my! *do* you realize, Mark, what a symposium it is to me? I do . . . to walk with you and talk with you, for weeks together—why, it's my dream of luxury. . . .

SHOES—Mark, remember that ever so much pleasure depends upon your shoes. Don't fail to have adequate preparations in that department.

Twichell arrived August 1st, as agreed. Clemens met him at Baden-Baden, and they at once set out on the tramp through the Black Forest, a happy, leisurely excursion, though they did not confine themselves to walking, but took a carriage or a donkey cart or a train—whatever convenient thing happened along. They idled and talked and gathered flowers, beguiling the way with discussion and entertaining tales. By and by they crossed over into Switzerland and considered the conquest of the Alps. The family followed by rail or diligence, and met them here and there when they rested from their wanderings. They climbed the Rigi, following which Twichell went on a little side trip while Clemens recovered. Then presently they were off to Interlaken, and then once more afoot they scaled the loneliness of Gemmi Pass, arriving some days later at Zermatt with its vision of the Matterhorn. They did not scale the Matterhorn; they were content to look at it.

The association of the wanderers was a very intimate one. Twichell had a fine chance to study Mark Twain's character under the trying conditions of travel, and in the letters to his wife his conclusions are reflected. Once he wrote:

A strange Mark, he is full of contradiction. I spoke last night of his sensitiveness to others' feelings. To-day the guide got behind, and came up as if he would like to go by, yet hesitated to do so. Mark paused, went aside and busied himself a minute picking a flower. In the halt the guide got by and resumed his place in front. Mark threw the flower away, saying: "I didn't

want that. I only wanted to give the old man a chance to go on without seeming to pass us."

At another time he wrote:

His sensitive regard for others extends to animals. When we are driving his concern is all about the horse. He can't bear to see the whip used, or to see a horse pull hard.

Once he tells how they came upon a foaming, tumbling stream and Mark Twain amused himself throwing sticks and stones into the boiling water. Twichell pushed some driftwood into the racing torrent.

When I got back to the path Mark was running downstream after it as hard as he could go, throwing up his hands and shouting in the wildest ecstasy, and when a piece went over a fall and emerged to view in the foam below he would jump up and down and yell. He said afterward that he hadn't been so excited in three months. He acted just like a boy.

Their wanderings ended at Lausanne, where they joined Mrs. Clemens. Their Swiss holiday was ended. Twichell set out for home by way of England, and Clemens gave himself up to reflection and rest. He wrote Twichell a characteristic letter, assuring him of his deep affection and the rich pleasure their companionship had afforded him.

I am putting out of my mind all memory of the times when I misbehaved toward you and hurt you; I am resolved to consider it forgiven, and to store up and remember only the charming hours of the journeys and the times when I was not unworthy to be with you and share a companionship which to me stands first after Livy's. It is justifiable to do this; for why should I let my small infirmities of disposition live and grovel among my mental pictures of the eternal sublimities of the Alps?

The Clemens party settled for the winter in Munich, where Mark Twain worked pretty steadily on the new book of travel. At times it seemed to him that his work went badly enough. Many chapters he threw aside or destroyed. He had the feeling that he had somehow lost the knack of descriptive narrative.

Spring came and he took the family to Paris, then to England, where he met Darwin and learned that the great man was an admirer of his books. Darwin said that he always kept a copy of *The Innocents Abroad* by his bedside to read when he wanted to go to sleep. It was a compliment with a doubtful sound, but the author was happy in the thought that his work could soothe the greatest thinker of the age.

They sailed in August, arriving in New York eleven days later. The papers reported that Mark Twain had grown older during his year and a half of absence and that his hair had turned quite gray. The family proceeded at once to Quarry Farm, and Clemens plunged into work on his book. To Twichell he wrote:

I am revising my MS. I did not expect to like it, but I do. I have been knocking out early chapters for more than a year now, not because they have not merit, but merely because they hindered the flow of the narrative; it was a dredging process. . . . I believe it will be a readable book of travels. I cannot see that it lacks anything but information.

XXIV

“THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER”—QUARRY FARM—
GENERAL GRANT

WORK on the new book went well enough for a time; then it began to drag. Clemens returned to Hartford, his book still unfinished. Out of six hundred final pages he tore up all but two hundred and eighty-eight. To Howells he wrote:

I took the 288 pages to Bliss and told him that was the very last line I should ever write on this book (a book which required 2,600 pages of MS. and I have written nearly 4,000, first and last).

I am soary and (flighty) as a rocket to-day, with the unutterable joy of getting that Old Man of the Sea off my back, where he has been roosting more than a year and a half.

The *Tramp Abroad* finished, Clemens was seized with an impulse to take up work again on a manuscript put aside more than two years before—*The Prince and the Pauper*. After the drudgery of his book of travel the story of little Edward Tudor seemed to him like play. To Howells he wrote:

I take so much pleasure in my story that I am loath to hurry, not wanting to get it done. Did I ever tell you the plot of it? It begins at 9 A. M., January 27, 1547. . . .

My idea is to afford a realizing sense of the exceeding severity of the laws of that day by inflicting some of their penalties upon the king himself, and allowing him a chance to see the rest of them applied to others.

Mrs. Clemens, to whom he read his manuscript aloud at the end of each day, could not get enough of it. Their little girls were also eager listeners, and the story was finally dedicated "To those good-mannered and agreeable children, Susy and Clara Clemens."

Meantime, the *Tramp Abroad* came from the press. Clemens sent Twichell a presentation copy with a long letter written on the fly-leaves, addressed: To my dear "Harris," such being the name under which Twichell appears in the book. In it he said:

Just imagine for a moment; I was collecting material in Europe during fourteen months for a book, and now that the thing is printed I find that you, who were with me only a month and a half of the fourteen, are in *actual* presence (not imaginary) in 440 of the 531 pages the book contains. . . . You have saved me an intolerable whole world of hated labor, and I'll not forget it, my boy.

The appendix of the *Tramp Abroad* contains some of the book's choicest humor. The essay on the "Awful German Language" is an example of Mark Twain at his very best.

Clemens was at this time doing a good deal of work for the *Atlantic Monthly*. Howells was still the editor, and kept at him for stories.

In addition to his own work, he now conceived a plan for Orion. Clemens himself had been attempting, from time to time, an absolutely faithful autobiography, but had found it an impossible task. He confessed freely that he lacked the courage, even the ability, to lay his soul bare. He believed Orion could

do it, and that if he would record in detail his long, weary struggle, with all his attempts and failures, his dreams and disappointments, it would make one of those priceless human documents such as have been left by Casanova and Rousseau.

Orion had long since returned from Nevada and taken up residence again in Keokuk. He had conducted a chicken farm and a variety of other enterprises, without success. He was, therefore, ripe for any new diversion, and the autobiography idea appealed to him. He set about it with enthusiasm, wrote a hundred pages or so of his childhood, set down everything with startling frankness, and mailed the result to his brother for inspection.

The story was all that Mark Twain had hoped for—more, in fact. There was nothing too humiliating for Orion to confess, once he got started. Clemens forwarded the manuscript to Howells, suggesting that chapters of the confession be printed anonymously in the *Atlantic*. Howells was a realist, but he had his limitations. He strongly advised against publication.

Orion, meantime, was steaming along at the rate of from ten to twenty pages a day, forwarding them as fast as written, while his courage was good and the fires warm. His brother, receiving a package by every morning mail, presently lost interest, then developed a hunted feeling, becoming finally desperate. He wrote wildly to shut Orion off, urging him to let his manuscript accumulate and send it in one large consignment, when finished. Orion obeyed, and in

this instance stuck to his work to the bitter, disheartening end. And it would have been all that Mark Twain had dreamed had his brother maintained the simple narrative of its early pages. But he drifted off into theological byways, lacking in human interest. A quantity of Orion's manuscript has been lost or destroyed. The remaining fragments of it show how faithful was his effort. It was never published, but it nevertheless brought a return. For it moved Samuel Clemens, who had always helped his brother at intervals, to make him now a steady allowance of seventy-five dollars per month, a comfortable income for those days.

That year (1880), in Elmira, a third little girl arrived in the Clemens household—a large, fine child whom they named Jane Lampton, for her grandmother, but always called Jean. Her father, writing to his friend Twichell, spoke of her as the “comeliest and daintiest and perfectest little creature the continents and archipelagoes have seen since the Bay (Clara) and Susy were her size.” He adds that Jean now heads the list in the affections of the children, her mamma being second, followed by the two cats, with himself last.

Sometime ago it used to be nip and tuck between me and the cats, but after the cats “developed” I didn’t stand any more show.

Mark Twain had taken up work again on the story of Huck Finn, begun four years earlier. He worked pretty steadily, piling up manuscript, taking always

a boyish pride in the number of pages he could complete at a sitting. When the day had gone well he would count them triumphantly, then, lighting a fresh cigar, would come tripping down the long stair that led to the level of the farmhouse, and, assembling his audience on the veranda, would read aloud the result of his industry. It was a friendly audience, but critical. The author was not allowed to take too many liberties with his heroes and heroines.

The reference in the letter to Twichell, concerning the cats at the farm, introduces an important feature of that happy resort. There were always cats at the farm. From childhood to old age, Mark Twain loved cats, and his children inherited this passion. Little Susy once said:

“The difference between Papa and Mamma is, that Mamma loves morals and Papa loves cats.”

Clemens cared little for dogs, though he was never unkind to them. Once at the farm a gentle hound named Bones even won his affection. Bones was always a welcome companion, and at the end of the summer, when Clemens, as was his habit, started down the drive ahead of the carriage, he found Bones halfway to the entrance, waiting for him. Stooping down, Mark Twain put his arms around the faithful animal and bade him an affectionate good-by.

He conceived enthusiasms for inanimate things as well as for animals. At one time it was a new filing system which was going to save the human race. At another time it was the newly invented fountain pen of which he was one of the earliest owners.

He wrote to everybody about it, urging its adoption, but later, when it acquired the habit of refusing to write, then suddenly deluging the paper, he pitched it out of the window and bought a stylographic pen, which he was sure would rescue the world from sin. He tried to get Howells to use it, and called him a "blamed old sodden-headed conservative" because he was not immediately converted. Howells, Doctor Brown, Twichell, and others were all presently struggling with the invention, trying to believe that salvation lay in its use. Howells flung his away, one day, in the midst of a letter to Clemens himself, and wrote: "No white man ought to use a stylographic pen, anyhow." And a little later Clemens himself replied: "You see, I am trying a new pen. I stood the stylograph as long as I could."

Eighteen hundred and eighty was a presidential year. General Grant came to Hartford, in General Garfield's behalf, and Clemens was selected to make the address of welcome. He began:

I am among those deputed to welcome you to the sincere and cordial hospitalities of Hartford, the city of the historic and revered Charter Oak, of which most of the town is built.

He pretended to be at a loss what to say next, and, leaning over, seemed to whisper to Grant. Then, as if he had been prompted by the great soldier, he straightened up and poured out a fervent eulogy on Grant's achievements, adding in an aside, as he finished, "I nearly forgot that part of my speech," which evoked much laughter from the assembly and

a grim smile from Grant. He then spoke of the general being now out of public employment, and told how England had rewarded the Duke of Wellington with his title and four million dollars in cash. He said:

If you had done and suffered for any other country what you have done and suffered for your own, you would have been affronted in the same sordid way. But, thank God, this vast and rich and mighty Republic is imbued to the core with a delicacy which will forever preserve her from so degrading you. . . .

Your country stands ready from this day forth to testify her measureless love and pride and gratitude toward you in every conceivable *inexpensive* way.

At which Grant's composure broke up completely, while the spectators shouted their approval.

XXV

MANY PROSPECTS—BACK TO THE RIVER—HUCK— READING WITH CABLE

MARK TWAIN was forty-five years old, his work was highly successful, his income was large, he had a world-wide fame. If he could have been satisfied "to go softly," to live life easily, he would have saved himself much storm and stress through future years. The trouble lay in the old human desire to improve his fortunes. Restlessly he embarked in enterprises that dazzled but led only to disappointment—even to disaster.

Once he invested a considerable sum in a steam generator and bade it a permanent good-by. Following this came a steam pulley, which extracted thirty-two thousand dollars from his bank account in a period of sixteen months. Twenty-five thousand dollars was the price of a marine telegraph, and about an equal sum disappeared in a watch-company flotation. These are only a few of his experiments. To recount all of them would be monotonous. They had one striking family resemblance—none of them paid. At a time when he felt that he had burned his fingers sufficiently there happened along a young inventor named Alexander Graham Bell, offering stock in a contrivance for carrying the human voice

on an electric wire. Clemens was polite but firm; he would have nothing to do with this new idea. Afterward he wrote:

I said I didn't want it at any price. He became eager; insisted that I take five hundred dollars' worth. He said he would sell as much as I wanted for five hundred dollars; offered to let me gather it up in my hands and measure it in a plug hat; said I could have a whole hatful for five hundred dollars. But I was a burnt child and I resisted all these temptations—resisted them easily. . . .

Next day he lent a large part of his free cash to a friend, who promptly failed; a little later he put the rest of it into an engraving process that cost him fifty thousand dollars before he was through with it. Once writing to his mother he said:

Life has come to be a very serious matter with me. I have a badgered, harassed feeling a good part of my time. It comes mainly from business responsibility and annoyances.

He had no moral right to be connected with business at all. He had a large perception of opportunity, but none whatever of details. He was the soul of honor, but in anything resembling practical direction he was a child. During any period of business venture he was generally in hot water: worried, impatient, alternately suspicious and over-trusting—rash, frenzied, and altogether upset.

The Prince and the Pauper, published in 1881, came from the press of James R. Osgood of Boston. Osgood and Clemens were boon companions. They

played billiards together and enjoyed each other's yarns. The new publisher was, in fact, too good a fellow to be a shrewd business man, and Clemens found no improvement, so far as profits were concerned. Nevertheless, he gave him another book, the "Mississippi" chapters, written for the *Atlantic Monthly* so long ago, these to be supplemented by a picture of the later Mississippi, which he now proposed to visit, with Osgood as his companion.

The fulfillment of this plan was not delayed. They set out immediately for St. Louis, where they took passage on the steamer *Gold Dust*, down the river.

They had gone on board at night, and Mark Twain was up bright and early, to see if he could discover any of the old landmarks. He looked out at the river, but all seemed strange to him. He made his way up to the pilot house. The man at the wheel, age about forty, seemed in no way familiar. Clemens engaged him in conversation, asking a few questions such as a landsman might ask. The pilot replied with a number of the ancient fictions usually furnished to landsmen; then, suddenly turning around, said:

"I want to get a cup of coffee. You hold her, will you, till I come back?" and before his visitor could say a word was outside and half down the steps. Clemens sprang instinctively to the wheel, as he would have done twenty years before. An instant later he realized that he was in charge of a big steamboat in the middle of the Mississippi River, without the slightest knowledge as to his locality. He thought the pilot must have gone crazy.

All at once he recognized where he was. The boat was in what is called the Grand Chain—a succession of hidden ledges, one of the most dangerous places on the river. They had to pass between two sunken rocks, where any variation meant disaster. Clemens no longer knew the exact locality of those rocks. He was about to drop dead when he heard a step on the stair, outside. The door opened and the pilot, leisurely entering, took the wheel, while his temporary assistant crawled weakly back to the seat. The pilot said:

“You thought you were playing a nice joke on me, didn’t you? You thought I didn’t know who you were? Why, I recognized that drawl of yours as soon as you opened your mouth.”

Clemens said: “Who the hell are *you*? I don’t remember you.”

“Well, perhaps you don’t. But I was a cub pilot on the river before the war, and I couldn’t get a license when I qualified for one, because the Pilots’ Association could keep new pilots out, and the law was that I had to be examined by two licensed pilots, and for a good while I could not get anyone to make that examination. But one day you and another pilot offered to do it. You put me through a good healthy examination and indorsed my application for a license.”

After that Mark Twain spent most of his waking time in the pilot house. Below Cairo the river was full and there was no danger of the boat hitting anything. All the marks had changed in twenty years, but “Sam” Clemens had not lost his steering skill

and was usually at the wheel. Often the pilot would lie down and sleep, leaving him there to dream that the years had not slipped away; that there had been no war, no mining days, no literary adventures; that he was still a pilot, happy and carefree as he had been twenty years before. He had himself called regularly for the four-o'clock watch, in order not to miss the morning, and truly enough it seemed to him then that his life had not changed. Yet a great change had come, not only in himself, but in the human aspects of the great thoroughfare. The railroads had killed steamboating—a craft of any sort was rarely seen.

He met Bixby at New Orleans. Bixby was captain now of a splendid new steamboat, the *City of Baton Rouge*, one of the Anchor Line steamers which marked the end of the Mississippi River steamboat building. Clemens made the up-river trip with Bixby, and these two in the pilot house found life wonderfully like the old days together. To the writer of these chapters, many years later, Horace Bixby exhibited a precious letter which Mark Twain had written on his return to Hartford. In it he said:

Twenty years have not added a month to your age or taken a fraction from your loveliness. . . . I'd rather be a pilot than anything else I've ever done in my life. How do you run Plum Point?

Clemens continued his trip up the river from St. Louis, as far as St. Paul, stopping a day or two at Hannibal. To his wife he wrote:

That world which I knew in its blooming youth is old and bowed and melancholy now. Its soft cheeks are leathery and withered, the fire has gone out of its eyes, the spring from its step. It will be dust and ashes when I come again.

And in his notebook he wrote:

The romance of boating is gone now. In Hannibal the steam-boat man is no longer a god.

Mark Twain now took some steps toward becoming a publisher on his own account. He combined with Osgood on the Mississippi book and installed Charles L. Webster, his nephew by marriage, as subscription manager in New York City. Webster had already looked after one or more of the unfortunate investments referred to earlier, but as these had been doomed from the beginning he had thus far made little display of his gifts.

Work on the Mississippi book dragged, and, as in the case of the *Tramp Abroad*, the author became almost desperate. He had vowed on that former occasion never again to limit himself as to time. But he had forgotten this pledge and was suffering accordingly. In October he wrote to Howells, then in Europe:

The spur and burden of the contract are intolerable to me. I can endure the irritation of it no longer.

And again in November, when he had told Osgood and everybody concerned that they must wait:

I have said with sufficient positiveness that I will finish the book at no particular date; that I will not hurry it; that I will

not hurry myself; that I will take things easy and comfortably—write when I choose to write, leave it alone when I do so prefer.

It was the middle of the following May (1883) that *Life on the Mississippi* was finally issued. It was a handsomely made book, for Osgood did everything with a lavish hand. Once in after years Clemens declared: "That book cost me fifty thousand dollars to make. Bliss could have built a whole library for that sum. But Osgood was a lovely fellow."

It was a successful book. Webster's New York agency was well conducted and would have returned a profit if the printing and engraving bills had been modified. In time it paid, and it remains to-day one of Mark Twain's most popular works. The first twenty chapters of it, originally printed in the *Atlantic*, present a picture of the river that will live as long as the English language. The remainder—the story of the river revisited—is rather more journalistic. The book proved a great favorite abroad and has been translated into many languages.

That summer at Quarry Farm Mark Twain invented a "history game," something to give the children instruction and exercise combined with pleasure. In a letter to Twichell he wrote:

Day before yesterday, feeling not in condition for writing, I left the study, but I couldn't hold in—had to do something; so I spent eight hours in the sun with a yardstick, measuring off the reigns of the English Kings on the roads in these grounds, from William the Conqueror to 1883, calculating to invent an open-air game which shall fill the children's heads with dates without study. I give each king's reign one foot of space to the year and

drive one stake in the ground to mark the beginning of each reign, and I make the children call the stake by the king's name. You can stand in the door and take a bird's-eye view of English monarchy from the Conqueror to Edward IV; then you can turn and follow the road up the hill to the study and beyond, with an opera-glass, and bird's eye view the rest of it to 1883.

It was a typical Mark Twain idea, the kind of thing he was always inventing. But this time he went farther with his thought than usual and tried to make of it a game for indoors as well as for the field. It was to include not only the English kings, but those of every other nation, likewise the great statesmen, churchmen, celebrities in every line. He enlarged and enlarged, in his characteristic Sellers fashion; ordered Webster to take out patents; wrote Orion and set him to gathering facts and dates by the bushel; planned departments in every newspaper to be devoted to the problems of the game; blew the iridescent bubble bigger and bigger, until finally he blew it up. His plans had become so elaborate, so intricate, that nobody could understand them; nobody could play the game, even if it should ever be completed. In a kind of fury he dismissed the whole matter, and wrote to Howells:

I might have known it wouldn't be an easy job, or somebody would have invented a decent historical game long ago—a thing which nobody has done.

Yet the original idea was a good one—the game that extended along the driveway and up the hillside of Quarry Farm. The children enjoyed it and played it through long summer afternoons.

On the whole, that proved an important summer, for it saw the end of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. His hard work on the Mississippi book found its reaction in fiction, with the river as a setting. When he suddenly got through with the history game he plunged into the story of Huck and finished it at a dead heat. To Howells he wrote:

I have written eight or nine hundred manuscript pages in such a brief time that I mustn't name the number of days; I shouldn't believe it myself, and of course couldn't expect you to.

Returning to Hartford, he invited Howells to come down and join with him in writing a new Sellers play for Raymond. The idea appealed to Howells and they entered into the work jubilantly. Speaking of it afterward, Howells said:

"Clemens took one scene, and I another. We had loads and loads of fun about it. We cracked our sides laughing over it as it went along. We thought it mighty good, and I think to this day that it was mighty good. We called the play 'Colonel Sellers.' We revived him. Clemens had a notion of Sellers leading a woman's temperance crusade."

The authors had a great opinion of their play, but unfortunately neither Raymond nor the managers agreed with them. Clemens eventually put it on the road with a well-known elocutionist, named Burbank, in the star part. But it was never a success and was not produced in New York. Raymond declared that the authors had made a lunatic out of

Sellers, and a year or two later Howells agreed with him, though he always believed that the play had in it elements of success.

Finding his finances somewhat reduced, Clemens now planned an elaborate recuperative measure. George W. Cable had come up from New Orleans and was giving public readings from his stories. Clemens conceived the idea of embarking with Cable, and perhaps Aldrich and Howells, in a grand tour in a private car, reaping a golden harvest. He offered to be general manager of the expedition and agreed to guarantee the others not less than seventy-five dollars a day apiece as their net return from the "circus," as he liked to call it. Howells and Aldrich amused themselves with the prospect, but only Cable was willing to realize it. The private-car feature was given up; Clemens made himself responsible for the profits of the expedition, and allowed Cable a salary of four hundred and fifty dollars a week and expenses.

The tour was a success, the readers being everywhere welcomed by full houses. They journeyed as far west as Chicago, giving readings en route, at Hannibal and Keokuk. Orion Clemens lived in Keokuk, also Mark Twain's mother, brisk and active for her eighty-one years. She had visited Hartford more than once, to enjoy "Sam's fine home," and had resided for a considerable period with Pamela, at Dunkirk, N. Y. But in the end she chose Keokuk as a residence. She attended the reading entertainment, and afterward, at home, when her children

asked her if she could still dance (she had been a famous dancer in her youth), she rose and, in spite of her years, tripped as lightly as a girl.

In the course of their wanderings Clemens and Cable stopped at Morristown and spent the night with the famous cartoonist, Thomas Nast. They were to leave by an early train, and Mrs. Nast had agreed to see that they were up in time. When she woke next morning she thought the house seemed strangely silent; the servants were sleeping soundly. The alarm clock in the back hall had been stopped about the hour the guest retired, also the tall studio clock; every timepiece on the premises had retired from business. Mark Twain had found that they interfered with his getting to sleep and had quieted them, regardless of early trains and reading engagements. When charged with the deed he said:

"Well, those clocks were all overworked, anyway. They will feel much better for a night's rest."

A few days later Nast sent him a caricature drawing—a picture which showed Mark Twain getting rid of the offending clocks.

The readers took a fortnight's holiday at Christmas-time, and Clemens went home to Hartford. There a great surprise awaited him. Mrs. Clemens had made *The Prince and the Pauper* into a play, and Clara and Susy, with the children of the neighborhood, had rehearsed it for presentation. A stage had been set up in George Warner's home, a short distance away.

Clemens knew on his arrival that something mys-

terious was in progress, for certain rooms were forbidden him—rooms where the little actors were costuming. He had no inkling, however, of the real plan, and was led, protesting somewhat, across the grounds to the Warner home and placed in a seat directly in front of the stage. Even then he didn't know what the play was to be until the curtain rose and Susy came on as the little Prince, with Daisy Warner in the part of Tom Canty. Then he knew what it was all about, and was deeply moved and gratified.

The play was a great success and was repeated a few days later, with Clemens himself in the rôle of Miles Hendon. It proved the beginning of a series of dramatic performances that continued in that neighborhood for several years. The stage was generally set up in the Clemens drawing room, and the children wrote plays for it themselves. Almost every Saturday was marked by some distinguished performance in which even little Jean had a part. They were usually "bloody" plays, full of executions. Jean as a court official sat at a small table and signed death warrants.

XXVI

THE GRANT BOOK—MARK TWAIN AT FIFTY—THE MACHINE

EARLY in the year Clemens had placed his manuscript of the Huck Finn story in Webster's to be issued by subscription. The young man was now his working partner, and the firm known as Charles L. Webster & Co., with offices at 658 Broadway. Through experience with the Mississippi book, Webster had acquired a practical knowledge of publishing, and made elaborate preparations for presenting Huck's story to the public.

Clemens himself took a lively interest in the details. From the pages of *Life* he selected an illustrator; he gave attention to the paper and binding, even to the method of canvassing for subscriptions. He returned from the reading circuit to find that Webster had disposed of some fifty thousand books, with orders still piling up.

It was a fine success and in every way deserved. Huck's story was hailed as a classic and will probably always rank as the best of Mark Twain's purely fictional writings. The tale of Huck and Nigger Jim drifting down a mighty river on a raft, cross-sectioning the various primitive aspects of human existence, is one of the most impressive examples of

vagabond narrative in any language. Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote, "It is a book I have read four times and am quite ready to begin again to-morrow." Andrew Lang called it "the great American novel."

The success of the Huck Finn book was really only a step toward a publishing venture which quickly followed. One night (it was in November, 1884), Mark Twain learned that General Grant, who had met with financial disaster, had decided to write and publish his memoirs. Grant had undertaken some articles for the *Century Magazine*, and the matter of a book had been discussed. Clemens, in the habit of dropping in on General Grant to smoke a cigar with him, called next morning to find out just how far the book idea had developed. After a brief talk he realized that the publishers had had little or no experience with subscription books. They probably expected to sell ten thousand copies of it, at most, and proposed the usual royalty of 10 per cent. Mark Twain, with a keen perception of public sentiment, saw a fortune slipping away and promptly protested against it. He believed a book by Grant would sell a quarter of a million copies, perhaps twice that number. He suggested that the general write to the American Publishing Company and get their proposition as to terms. Grant, however, demurred. The Century Company, he said, had proposed a book, and, all things being equal, it should go to the man who had first suggested it to him. Clemens said:

"General, if that is so it belongs to *me*."

Grant did not understand until the other recalled

to him how at an earlier time he had urged him to write his memoirs; had pleaded with him, in fact, agreeing to superintend the book's publication. He added:

"I am publishing my own book, and by the time yours is ready it is quite possible I shall have the best-equipped subscription establishment in the country. If you will place your book with my firm—and I feel that I have at least an equal right to consideration—I will pay you 20 per cent. of the list price; or, if you prefer, I will give you 70 per cent. of the net returns, and I will pay all office expenses out of my 30 per cent."

To General Grant it seemed that here was a good friend offering to bankrupt himself out of pure philanthropy—something not to be permitted. He intimated that the president of the Century Company had been unwilling to guarantee him a profit of twenty-five thousand dollars on the book. Clemens said:

"General, I have my check book with me. I will draw you a check now, for twenty-five thousand dollars, for the first volume of your memoirs, and will add a like amount for each volume you may write, as an advance royalty payment."

Grant's son, Colonel Fred Grant, joined with Clemens in urging that matters be delayed until more careful inquiry concerning the possibilities of publishing could be made. In the end, Grant sent over to Philadelphia for his old friend, George W. Childs, and laid

the whole matter before him. Webster's complete success with the *Huck Finn* book demonstrated the capabilities of his firm. Both Childs and Fred Grant advised strongly in his favor. Childs said later that General Grant himself wished Mark Twain to have the book, though chiefly on the grounds of friendship. The arrangement was concluded on a basis of 70 per cent. of the net profits to be paid to General Grant who continuously protested that he was not entitled to such a share.

The old soldier meantime had developed a serious illness, one that was to prove fatal within the year. It was cancer of the tongue, and he realized that if he meant to finish his great undertaking he must not be idle even for a day. Some articles which were to be published in the *Century Magazine* were ready, and Grant was working at the rate of several thousand words a day. He had a superb memory and a fine flow of direct and powerful English. Webster provided him with a stenographer, which proved a great relief as long as he was able to speak.

Reports of the advance sales were a great comfort to him. By the first of May orders for sixty thousand sets (two volumes each) had been received. On that day Mark Twain made a memorandum prophecy that a total of three hundred thousand sets would be sold, on which General Grant's royalty would amount to more than four hundred thousand dollars.

Mark Twain was often with General Grant during these final weeks. He told him stories, recalling his

own soldiering period when Grant's troops had made life disagreeable for him during two rainy weeks in the Missouri swamps.

Summer came, and General Grant was taken to Mt. McGregor, near the Adirondacks. By his request Clemens came up from Elmira and remained several days. The old soldier could no longer speak, but he had about completed his manuscript. He was adding only the finishing touches, which he wrote on small slips of paper, each containing a few words. On one of these slips he wrote:

If I could have two weeks of strength I could improve it very much. As I am, however, it will have to go about as it is, with verifications by the boys and by suggestions which will enable me to make a point clear here and there.

Certainly no campaign was ever conducted with a braver heart. Once he asked if an estimate could now be made of what amount would accrue to his family from the publication. His publisher's prompt reply that already the amount of his share exceeded one hundred and fifty thousand dollars afforded him deep comfort. He was also assured that the country was not yet one-third canvassed. When Clemens left, General Grant was sitting fully dressed, with a shawl about his shoulders and pencil and paper beside him. It was a picture that would never fade from the memory.

In a note made July 23, 1885, at 10 A. M., on receipt of the news that General Grant was dead, Mark Twain wrote of that last parting:

I then believed he would live several months. He was still adding little perfecting details to his book, and a preface among other things. He was entirely through a few days later. Since then the lack of any strong interest to employ his mind has enabled the tedious weariness to kill him. I think his book kept him alive several months. He was a very great man and superlatively good.

Clemens's prophecy as to the sale of General Grant's *Memoirs* was more than fulfilled. Nearly four hundred and fifty thousand dollars was paid to Mrs. Grant. The first check of two hundred thousand dollars, drawn February 27, 1886, remains the largest single royalty check in history.

Mark Twain, now fifty years old, was, as he believed, on the top wave of prosperity. With his natural optimism, it seemed to him that nothing could stem the tide of fortune. To a friend he said:

"I am frightened at the proportion of my prosperity. It seems to me that whatever I touch turns to gold."

Equally fortunate conditions prevailed in his home life. At Elmira the children, with their Langdon cousins, romped happily the summer through. Their "Aunt Sue" had built for them a little house, called by the story-book name of "Ellerslie," completely furnished, even to a small practical cooking stove.

Susy, who was thirteen—a romantic child with a literary turn—began about this time a "biography" of her father. It opened:

... We are a very happy family! We consist of papa, mamma, Jean, Clara, and me. It is papa I am writing about, and I shall

have no trouble in not knowing what to say about him, as he is a very striking character. Papa's appearance has been described many times, but very incorrectly; he has beautiful curly gray hair, not any too thick, or any too long, just right; a Roman nose, which greatly improves the beauty of his features, kind blue eyes, and a small mustache, he has a wonderfully shaped head, and profile, he has a very good figure in short he is an extraordinarily fine looking man. All his features are perfect, except that he hasn't extraordinary teeth. His complexion is very fair, and he doesn't ware [*sic*] a beard.

He is a very good man, and a very funny one; he has got a temper but we all of us have in this family. He is the loveliest man I ever saw, or ever hope to see, and oh so absent-minded!

That this is a fair picture of the Clemens household, and the truest of Mark Twain at fifty that has been preserved, cannot be doubted. Clemens himself in a letter to Orion's wife presents the peaceful quiet of that summer at Quarry Farm.

This is a superb Sunday. . . .

The city in the valley is purple with shade, as seen from up here at this study. The Cranes are reading and loafing in the canvas-curtained summer house, fifty yards away, on a higher (the highest) point; the cats are loafing over at Ellerslie, which is the children's estate and dwelling house in their own private grounds (by deed from Susy Crane), a hundred yards from the study, among the clover and young oaks and willows. Livy is down at the house, but I shall now go down and bring her up to the Cranes to help us occupy the lounges and hammocks, whence a great panorama of distant hills and valley and city is seeable. The children have gone on a lark through the neighboring hills and woods, Susy and Clara horseback and Jean driving a buggy, with the coachman for comrade and assistant at need. It is a perfect day indeed.

Mark Twain's publishing business did not maintain its great headway. Clemens, full of schemes and

enthusiasm, was very far from being a business man, and Webster, whatever his gifts, was at first a little carried off his feet by his success. There was a feeling that they had only to publish a book to insure its sale. A book by General McClellan and another by General Sheridan were easy enough to obtain; also a *Life of Pope Leo XIII*, the last named to be published with the Holy Father's sanction and blessing. But the profits in these several instances were disappointing. Webster even made a trip to Rome to interview the Pope, and the book, published simultaneously in six languages, was exploited in every conceivable fashion, yet the aggregate sales fell far short of the number which the agents had promised for their first orders. It paid, but it did not pay much. It was the same with a number of other books. Some did not pay at all.

Furthermore, the running expenses of the business were large. Webster had by this time established himself in fine quarters on East Fifteenth Street, with a ground-floor salesroom. Presently a book-keeper embezzled thirty thousand dollars, of which only a trifling sum was recovered. Then Webster's health failed. He was unable to give full attention to important details, and at the end of about two years retired altogether, leaving its affairs in the hands of his assistant.

A Library of American Literature, edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson, in ten volumes, was undertaken with great hopes, but it was a subscription venture and the

monthly payments did not come in fast enough to provide for the cost of manufacture.

Mark Twain's personal finances during this period were subject to another heavy drain. With an inventor named Paige he had undertaken to manufacture a typesetting machine and was supplying several thousand dollars a month for this venture. Paige was as optimistic and impractical as Clemens himself, and perhaps not entirely trustworthy. Every month he promised that the machine would certainly be done in a little while, and every month there was some reason why its completion was postponed.¹

A time came when the machine seemed to be perfected, when it would set type with marvelous rapidity and accuracy, the only trouble being that it would not remain continuously in order. Even when it was behaving well enough, Paige would as likely as not tear it to pieces to make some whimsical improvement. Once when Clemens had arranged with capitalists, who were to join in financing the enterprise, to come to Hartford and see the typesetter in action, Paige took a sudden notion to make one of his improvements, and the capitalists were told not to come. This was bad for their enthusiasm. It could not be warmed up again.

Literary work suffered during this period. Mark Twain had begun *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* two years earlier, and a manuscript

¹The episode of the typesetting machine has been told in full in *Mark Twain—A Biography*, and can only be briefly summarized here.

was badly needed by his own company. He worked on it during the summer of 1888, at the farm, but returned with it to Hartford unfinished. He came back earlier than usual on account of the machine, leaving the family still in Elmira. He expected to have both the story and the typesetter finished that fall; then everything would be well again. The strain was really very hard; even the children were beginning to understand it. When one of the nurses one day spoke of buying some blacking for the children's shoes little Jean said:

"Why, Marie, you mustn't ask for things now; the machine isn't done."

Yet an air of success and prosperity prevailed. Clemens made a trip to Boston to hear Bill Nye and James Whitcomb Riley in their new combined entertainment, and Major Pond, who had conducted the Clemens-Cable expedition, prevailed upon him to introduce Nye and Riley to the Boston public. When he appeared on the stage the audience, recognizing him, rose in a body, waving their handkerchiefs and shouting. There was a great organ in the place and the organist turned on its full strength. The noise and excitement were tremendous; Mark Twain's hold on the public was at its height.

Pond proposed a regular tour with Nye and Riley, promising huge returns. Clemens, badly as he was beginning to need the money, put this temptation behind him. He was willing to lecture free, here and there, and once, when Colonel Richard Malcolm Johnson had been billed to appear with Thomas

Nelson Page in Baltimore, and Page, because of his wife's illness, was unable to come, Mark Twain went down in his place, helped to pack the house, and when the entertainment was ended pushed over to Johnson the entire receipts, saying, "That's yours, Colonel; I am not reading for money these days."

In the midst of these various matters Yale College conferred on Mark Twain the degree of Master of Arts. Later in the year he made an address at Yale in which he said he had come down to institute certain college reforms. He said that his degree gave him very broad and responsible powers, and that he had decided to drop the use of the Greek-written character in the college, because it was so hard to spell with, and so impossible to read after you got it spelled. He said that he had mentioned this to the Greek professor, and that he saw by what followed that nothing but early neglect had saved that professor from being a very profane man. He added that he had made some suggestions to the astronomer of the university, who had been "gadding around after comets and other such odds and ends—tramps and derelicts of the skies."

I told him pretty plainly that we couldn't have that. I told him that it was no economy to go on piling up and piling up raw material in the way of new stars and comets and asteroids, that we couldn't ever have any use for till we have worked off the old stock. At bottom I don't really mind comets so much, but somehow I have always been down on asteroids. There is nothing mature about them. I wouldn't sit up nights the way that man does if I could get a basketful of them. He said it was the best line of goods he had; he said he could trade them to Rochester for

comets, and trade the comets to Harvard for nebulæ, and trade the nebulæ to the Smithsonian for flint hatchets. I felt obliged to stop this thing on the spot; I said we couldn't have the university turned into an astronomical junk shop. And while I was at it I thought I might as well make the reform complete; the astronomer is extraordinarily mutinous, and so with your approval I will transfer him to the law department and put one of the law students in his place. A boy will be more biddable, more tractable, also cheaper. It is true he cannot be intrusted with important work at first, but he can comb the skies for nebulæ till he gets his hand in. I have other changes in mind, but as they are in the nature of surprises I judge it politic to leave them unspecified at this time.

XXVII

KIPLING COMES TO ELMIRA—THE "YANKEE" LEAVING AMERICA

ONE blazing day during the summer of 1889 a perspiring young man, in a hired hack, made his way up the long hill to Quarry Farm. He had come to see Mark Twain, he said, and was grieved to find that the great man was at General (Charlie) Langdon's. Mrs. Crane and Susy Clemens, the only ones at the farm that day, gave him a seat on the veranda and brought him cool water and a glass of the milk for which the farm has always been famous. The young man rested and talked to them of the far-away part of the world from which he had come. He said he was a correspondent for an East Indian journal, the *Pioneer*, and that he had come to Elmira especially to see Mark Twain. His talk was of India—wonderful talk that fascinated his hearers, especially Susy, to whom India was a fairyland, made up of magic, airy architecture, and mystery. He gave them his card, which bore the address, Allahabad, and a name, then strange to them, Rudyard Kipling. Susy stuck it in the mirror frame of her dressing table, as a treasure.

Kipling made his way back to town, hunted up Mark Twain, and the two had a talk together, of

which Kipling has preserved an account in one of his American letters. After he had gone, Mrs. Langdon wanted to know who he was. Clemens said:

"He is a stranger to me, but he is a most remarkable man—and I am the other one. Between us we cover all knowledge; he knows all that can be known, and I know the rest."

About a year after Kipling's visit to Elmira, George Warner came to the Clemens library at Hartford with a small book in his hand. He asked Mark Twain if he had ever heard of Rudyard Kipling. Clemens said that he had not, and Warner assured him that he would hear of him very soon and that the noise he was going to make would be loud and continuous. The little book was the *Plain Tales*, and a day or two later he came with a copy of the *London World*, with a sketch of Kipling in it, mentioning his visit to the United States, and the fact that he had passed through Elmira. Susy promptly went to her room and brought the card from its place in the frame of her mirror and the Quarry Farm visitor stood identified.

In later years the two men became close friends, and once Kipling wrote to his publisher, Frank Doubleday:

I love to think of the great and godlike Clemens. He is the biggest man you have on your side of the water by a damn sight, and don't you forget it. Cervantes was a relation of his.

The Prince and the Pauper was dramatized that year by Abby Sage Richardson and was produced by

Daniel Frohman, with little Elsie Leslie in the double rôle of the Prince and Tom Canty. Elsie often came to Hartford to play with the Clemens children, and became a general favorite. The actor, William Gillette, was also at this time a frequent visitor. Clemens had advanced funds to pay for his dramatic education and Gillette was almost as one of the family. Like the others, he became fond of little Elsie, and one day he and Mark Twain decided to embroider for her a pair of slippers—a plan which they promptly carried out. It was not the most skillful embroidery, but the little girl prized the slippers beyond all her possessions.

No Mark Twain book had appeared since *Huck Finn*, in 1884. Clemens finished the *Yankee* at last, and at the end of 1889 Webster & Co. published the book. It was profusely illustrated by Dan Beard, and made a good deal of a stir. Howells welcomed it as an echo of his own thought. To Clemens he wrote:

It's a mighty great book and it makes my heart burn with wrath. It seems that God didn't forget to put a soul in you. He shuts most literary men off with a brain, merely.

In after years he declared that "the *Yankee*, of all the fanciful schemes in fiction," pleased him most.

The American critics as a whole were favorable to the story in spite of the fact that it contained much of Mark Twain's worst writing—coarse and extravagant burlesque, which mars some of its finest scenes and antagonizes the reader often at the very

moment when he is warm with righteous wrath against cruel custom and vicious laws. Much of this is due to the fact that Mrs. Clemens's health prevented her from reading the manuscript and giving it the benefit of her restraining influence and refinement of taste. As an example of Mark Twain at his literary worst and best the *Yankee* ranks supreme.

The story has had no great popularity in America and still less in England, whose poetic legendry it turned into ridicule. The English papers as a whole condemned it; even Andrew Lang found little in it to praise. And yet, when all is said, it is a greatly imagined work. If it could have been—even could be, to-day—drastically edited it might rank among Mark Twain's highest achievements.

Clemens would seem to have intended to close his literary career with the *Yankee*. In a letter to Howells he referred to it as his “swan song,” though perhaps this was not literally intended. He was only fifty-four years old, and certainly still had much to say. Moreover, there was going to be great need that he should say it. What with the typesetting machine and a business with increasing liabilities, he was finding it increasingly difficult to provide for the costly Hartford home. European residence began to be considered. Living abroad was much cheaper.

As the months passed the reasons for going multiplied. Mark Twain's mother died in October, 1890, and Mrs. Clemens's mother a little more than a

month later. The death of Charles L. Webster occurred the following spring; America had become a sad place. As a climax, the typesetting episode now apparently came to an end in complete failure. The capitalists who had promised support in the enterprise would have nothing to do with it. The family securities were exhausted. Clemens signed some notes to keep his book business going, plunged into the writing of a new novel to be founded on the Sellers play which he had written with Howells, arranged with the *New York Sun* and the McClure syndicate for a series of European letters, and began to make preparations to close the beautiful Hartford home.

It was a sad breaking up. Most of the servants had been with them for a number of years, some of them since their beginning. The day came for departure and the carriage was at the door. Mrs. Clemens did not come immediately. She was looking into the room, bidding a kind of silent good-by to the home she had made and to all its memories. Then, following the others, she entered the carriage, and Patrick McAleer drove them together for the last time. They sailed the 6th of June, 1891.

XXVIII

EUROPEAN WANDERINGS—JOAN OF ARC— THE BUSINESS YOKE

CLEMENS wrote his first letter from Aix, describing that "paradise of rheumatics," as he called it. From Aix they journeyed to Bayreuth, where he wrote of the Wagner musical festival. Mark Twain had no great appreciation of classical music. He said:

I feel strongly out of place here. Sometimes I feel like the one sane person in a community of the mad; sometimes I feel like the one blind man where all the others see, the one groping savage in the college of the learned, and always during service I feel like a heretic in heaven.

He tells how he really enjoyed two of the operas and rejoiced in supposing that he had developed a musical taste. But, alas! he was informed by experts that those particular operas were not real music at all. Then he says:

Well, I ought to have recognized the sign—the old sure sign that has never failed me in matters of art. Whenever I enjoy anything in art it means that it is mighty poor. The private knowledge of this fact has saved me from going to pieces with enthusiasm in front of many and many a chromo.

By the end of August they were in Nuremberg, which he calls the "city of exquisite glimpses," and

a little later at Heidelberg, in their old apartment of thirteen years before, with its wonderful prospect of wood and hill and the far-lying valley of the Rhine. Then presently they were in Switzerland, in Lausanne, on the borders of the beautiful Lake Leman.

He was getting into the spirit of writing, and considered doing a book of travel suggested by the *Century* editors, something in the style of *The Innocents Abroad*. As incidental to this he decided to make a floating trip down the Rhone in a flat-bottomed boat, with only his guide, Joseph Very, and the owner of the boat as his companions. He bought the boat outright for five dollars, and a few days later set out on this lovely, lazy journey. Certainly it was pleasant, in those limpid September days, to go swinging down that swift gray river, by ancient villages and purpling vineyards. For a while he made voluminous notes, then the enjoyment became too great for effort, and, lulled into laziness, he put his notebook aside.

One tranquil afternoon, floating drowsily along, about fifteen miles below the city of Valence, something very unusual happened. Observing the eastern horizon Mark Twain noticed that in one place the distant blue mountain range presented a striking profile outline of a human face. Pointing to it, he said to the guide:

"Name it. Who is it?"

Joseph replied, "Napoleon."

The pilot also promptly agreed that the face was that of the great soldier.

They were abreast an ancient village at the time, a picturesque jumble of houses, their roofs all run together, and he decided to stop there for the night. They found a small inn, and from his window next morning he saw a marvelous sight—the sun rising behind the mountain range, and, silhouetted against the morning sky, the face discovered the previous afternoon, “Napoleon dreaming of universal empire.”

He made a pencil sketch of the Napoleon head, adding that it was opposite Beauchastel, his intention being to tell the world of his discovery. But he made no use of his Rhone notes, and in later years his memory betrayed him. Then recalling the incident, he located the Napoleon near Arles. In that later day he even prepared (but did not publish) a brief article which he entitled, “The Lost Napoleon,” declaring that when it was rediscovered it would become one of the wonders of the world. He even started a friend, Theodore Stanton, hunting for it, but without the correct directions, Stanton, of course, failed to find it.

It remained for the writer of these chapters, motoring up the Rhone on another September day, twenty-two years after Mark Twain’s leisurely excursion, to rediscover the figure of the reclining Napoleon opposite the ancient village of Beauchastel. With Mark Twain’s exact memoranda, which had passed into the writer’s hands, the discovery was not a difficult matter.¹ The great stone face on the

¹On Mark Twain’s death the author of this book became one of his literary executors.

horizon is truly inspiring and beautiful, but it is visible only on a very clear day.

It required ten days to float to Arles; then the current gave out. Clemens presented his boat to the original owner, and returned to Lausanne by rail. In a letter he wrote:

It was twenty-eight miles (farther) to Marseilles, and somebody would have to row. That would not have been pleasure; it would have meant work for the sailor, and I do not like work, even when another person does it.

He took the family to Berlin for the winter, and settled them, first in an apartment on Körnerstrasse, later at the Hôtel Royal, Unter den Linden.

It was a gay winter. The Clemens family were welcome guests at all the diplomatic events—gatherings of distinguished men and women from every circle of achievement. William Walter Phelps, then American minister to Berlin, made an especial effort to show attentions to his distinguished countryman.

Clemens was in pretty good health, for a time. Then one night he delivered a talk, in a crowded and hot lecture room, went to a ball later, and awoke next morning with a heavy cold. Pneumonia followed and kept him in bed the better part of a month. When he was nearing recovery the Emperor sent Frau von Versen, a Clemens relative who had married a German general, with an invitation to the palace. He was not well enough yet to attend, and a little later the Emperor requested her to prepare at her home a

dinner for Mark Twain and himself, with a few special guests. When this invitation arrived little Jean Clemens, eleven years old, was awed. Reflecting on the matter, she said:

"Why, Papa, if it keeps on like this, pretty soon there won't be anybody for you to get acquainted with but God."

Matters at the dinner went very well until a moment came when the German ruler made some remarks in praise of the American system of soldier pensions. Clemens had very positive views on this subject. He thought the system had been abused in the interest of politics, and said so. He forgot for the moment that court etiquette did not sanction any disagreement with the opinions of royalty, and noticed that his observations were making the company decidedly uncomfortable. He closed his remarks and William refrained from speaking to him during the rest of the evening, except to say good-night when the company broke up.

He did not see Emperor William again, though he received invitations both from the Empress Dowager and from the Empress herself, to the palace. Fourteen years later, a friend returning from a diplomatic mission to Germany brought a special complimentary message from the German ruler. It was:

"Convey to Mr. Clemens my kindest regards. Ask him if he remembers the dinner at Von Versen's and ask him why he didn't do any more talking at that dinner."

It seemed an ambiguous message. Possibly it was

intended to convey some sort of an imperial apology.

Clemens was still far from robust, and at the end of February journeyed to the south of France. He took the family to Florence in April, and so attractive did they find it that they engaged residence—the Villa Viviani near Settignano—on a hill to the east of Florence, with vineyard and olive grove sloping away to the city lying in a haze, a vision of beauty and peace.

They were not to have possession until autumn, and they returned to Germany for the baths of Nauheim. Clemens now made a brief business trip to America, for matters there were becoming steadily more alarming. Mr. Hall, the young man in charge of the publishing business, was working desperately but times were hard and more money was needed to provide for the manufacture of their big enterprise—the *Library of American Literature*—"L. A. L." as they called it—which threatened to destroy them. The old machine enterprise, too, showed renewed signs of life, and the undestroyable Paige was holding out promises.

It was a fruitless journey. Clemens accomplished nothing further than that he wrote an article on shipboard entitled "All Sorts and Conditions of Ships," a fine piece of work, considering the trying circumstances under which it was written.

He worked steadily that summer in Nauheim, on *Tom Sawyer Abroad* and *Those Extraordinary Twins*, the latter being the original form of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. In spite of business vexations the days must

have passed pleasantly, for in an old letter there appears a reference to "that happy summer at Nauheim." The Twichells arrived from America, and Mark Twain and Twichell renewed their excursions together.

One day they ran over to Homburg, the great pleasure resort, and while there happened to meet on the promenade the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) with the British ambassador. Twichell and Clemens were presented; then presently the Prince took Mark Twain's arm and the two marched up and down, talking earnestly together, the Prince solid, erect, and soldierlike, Mark Twain weaving along in his curious swinging gait, in a full tide of talk and brandishing a sun umbrella of the most scandalous description. This is Twichell's report of the meeting.

The family was back at Florence, in the Villa Viviani, in September, and here it was that Mark Twain presently began a work for which he had been, consciously or unconsciously, preparing for nearly fifty years, the *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*. His interest in Joan's tragic story had never waned since the day, so long ago, when a stray wind had blown a leaf of it into his boyish consciousness. All his life the martyred girl had been his idol and he had meant some day to write of her. About 1880, he started collecting material and preparing himself for the work. Now, more than twelve years later, in the weather-stained old palace, looking down on Florence and across to the villa-dotted hills, he began his beautiful story of the Maid of Orleans. He thought of it

as a companion piece to *The Prince and the Pauper*, and, remembering, or at least feeling that this story had missed a certain appreciation by being connected with his signature, he resolved to offer Joan anonymously. Walking the floor one day at Viviani, smoking vigorously, he said to Mrs. Clemens and Susy:

"I shall never be accepted seriously over my own signature. People always want to laugh over what I write, and are disappointed if they don't find a joke in it. This is a serious book; it means more to me than anything I have ever undertaken. I shall write it anonymously."

He wrote rapidly, once he got his plans perfected and his material arranged. The reading of his youth and manhood, with the vivid impressions of that earlier time, came back to him now as something which his own eyes had witnessed. Others of his family went down into the city almost daily, but he remained in that ancient garden, with Joan as his companion, the aged *Sieur de Conte* pouring out that marvelous and tragic story. At the end of each day he would read to the family what he had written. Never had he worked so well and seldom as rapidly. At the end of six weeks he had finished a hundred thousand words, an astonishing performance, when one remembers that, after all, he was writing history, some of which he must dig laboriously from a foreign source. He had always more or less kept up his study of the French language, and it stood him now in good stead. The multitude of notes along the margin of his French authorities bear evidence to the mag-

nitude of his toil. Invited everywhere, he accepted sparingly, preferring to remain in the character of the old chronicler following again the banner of the Maid of Orleans, marshaling her twilight armies across his illumined page.

It was hard to have to stop in the midst of his work and make another trip to America, but matters there were becoming steadily more alarming. A panic era was beginning, and the business of Charles L. Webster & Co. was in no condition to weather a storm. Even young Hall, a buoyant soul, was no longer optimistic. Clemens wrote him to sell a portion or all of the business, to do anything that would avoid increased liabilities. Such money as still came to Mrs. Clemens, with whatever of his own earnings as he could spare, were flung into the general fund. It was no time to sell anything. Paige, who had written glowing letters as to the machine's new prospects, had only fresh promises to offer. Clemens wrote:

Paige shed even more tears than usual. What a talker he is! He could persuade a fish to come out and take a walk with him. When he is present I always believe him; I can't help it. . . . Paige and I always meet on effusively affectionate terms, and yet he knows perfectly well that if I had him in a steel trap I would shut out all human succor and watch that trap till he died.

He met Howells in New York. They tried to cheer each other; yet it was somehow a sad reunion, for they were no longer young, and when they called the roll of friends there were many vacancies. They had reached an age where someone they loved died every

year. To Mrs. Crane, Clemens wrote of the unrealities of life:

I dreamed I was born and grew up and was a pilot on the Mississippi, and a miner and a journalist in Nevada, and a pilgrim in the *Quaker City*, and had a wife and children, and went to live in a villa at Florence—and this dream goes on and on and sometimes seems so real that I almost believe it is real. I wonder if it is?

He was back in Florence by the end of May, trying to work, but often spending a part of his nights walking the floor in the anguish of his uncertainties. In a letter to Hall he said: "I am terribly tired of business. I am by nature and disposition unfit for it, and I want to get out of it." This was the man who eight years before had made the Grant family rich and believed that whatever he touched turned to gold.

They closed Viviani and returned to the German baths, for Mrs. Clemens's health was not good. In spite of his distractions, Mark Twain was able to do some work, and his immortal "Defence of Harriet Shelley" belongs to this period.

To Hall in America he wrote:

I strongly advise that every penny that comes in shall be applied to paying off debts. . . . We can pay a part of the debts owing to outsiders, none to the Clemenses. . . . What I am mainly hoping for is to save my book royalties. . . . If they go I am a beggar.

Then presently he could stand it no longer, and at the end of August (1893) sailed, the second time that year, for New York. Arriving there, he took a room

at the Players—"A cheap room," he wrote, "at \$1.50 per day."

And now began for Mark Twain a remarkable period—one of black depressions and gay reactions—a turbulent half-year during which his fortunes were at a lower ebb than ever before; lower even than during those mining days among the bleak Esmeralda hills. Then he had no one but himself and was young. Now, at fifty-eight, precious lives depended upon him and he was menaced by a burden of debt. The liabilities of Charles L. Webster & Co. were fully two hundred thousand dollars. Something like sixty thousand dollars of this was money supplied by Mrs. Clemens, but the vast remaining sum was due to banks, to printers, to binders, and to dealers in various publishing materials. Somehow it must be paid.

XXIX

MR. ROGERS—END OF BUSINESS—JOAN—
AROUND THE WORLD

IN THIS darkest hour there came into Mark Twain's life a man to whom in old age he would owe more than to any other of his myriad friends.

One night at the Murray Hill Hotel Dr. Clarence C. Rice said:

"Clemens, I want you to know my friend, Mr. H. H. Rogers; he is an admirer of your books."

Clemens turned to shake hands with a handsome, distinguished-looking man whose name was already familiar to him as one of America's great financiers.

"I was one of your early admirers," Mr. Rogers said. "I have read everything of yours that I could get hold of."

They sat down at a table, and Mark Twain told some stories. Some weeks later he wrote Mrs. Clemens (by this time in Paris) that he had the "best and wisest man of the whole Standard Oil group" interested in his affairs.

The new friend, he said, was looking into the typesetter business and had promised assistance. Also he had urged him (Clemens) "to stop walking the floor." This was glad news, and somewhat later he reported that Mr. Rogers had suggested to his son-

in-law, William Evarts Benjamin, a publisher, to take over that white elephant, the Library of American Literature, for fifty thousand dollars—a sum which provided for the more insistent creditors.

Clemens did, in reality, give up walking the floor, and for a time at least found happier diversions. He was gorgeously entertained by the Lotos Club, he attended dinners, amusements, suppers, balls, acquiring the picturesque title the “Belle of New York.”

His letters now were full of radiant optimism. Once more he had full faith in the type machine. He declared that their ship of fortune was in sight, and that, once anchored, he would give up business forever:

I shall say Farewell—a long farewell—to *business!* I will *never* touch it again!

I will live in literature, I will wallow in it, revel in it; I will swim in ink! *Joan of Arc*—but all this is premature; the anchor is not down yet.

Sometimes he could not wait to write, and sent cables. Such as: “Expect good news in ten days.” “Look out for good news.” “Nearing success.”

Mrs. Clemens reported these messages to her sister in Elmira, adding: “They make me laugh, for they are so like my beloved ‘Colonel,’” meaning, of course, “Sellers.”

With it all he was doing a good deal of literary work—articles and stories one of which, “Traveling with a Reformer,” grew out of a trip which he had made with Osgood to Chicago a long time before.

When he now made a similar trip with Mr. Rogers, and the latter applied for passes, the president of the Pennsylvania Road replied:

"No, I am not going to give Mark Twain a pass. I've been reading his 'Traveling with a Reformer,' in which he abuses our road. I wouldn't let him ride over it again if I could help it. The only way I'll agree to let him go over it at all is in my private car. I have stocked it with everything he can possibly want, and have given orders that if there is anything else he wants the train is to be stopped until they can get it."

Mark Twain's troubles were not ended—not by any means. In April, 1894, the affairs of Webster & Co. reached a stage where a considerable sum of money must be provided or the business brought to an abrupt end. Mr. Rogers was immediately notified, and, after sleeping upon the matter, advised an assignment, for the benefit of the creditors. It was, in fact, useless to continue; the situation was hopeless. The end of the long struggle had come.

Clemens's chief regret was on his wife's account. He knew that to her the word "failure" would be associated with disgrace. She had pinched herself with a hundred economies to keep the business afloat. Mr. Rogers said:

"Assure her from me that there's not even a tinge of disgrace in making this assignment. By doing it you will relieve yourself of a fearful load of dread and in time you will be able to pay everything and stand clear before the world."

There was a meeting of the creditors, where Mark Twain was represented by Mr. Rogers, who firmly took matters in hand, assuring them that it was to the interest of all concerned to let the author retain his copyrights as a partial means of support while he earned the money to meet his debts. Settlement was to be made on a basis of fifty cents on the dollar, but both Clemens and his wife declared that sooner or later they would pay in full. Friends stepped in and offered to lend him money, but he accepted nothing. When the assets of the Webster firm were disposed of he still owed more than seventy thousand dollars. There were moments when he was deeply depressed. Once he said: "I need not dream of paying it. I never could manage it."

He returned presently to France—to Mrs. Clemens, who was deeply depressed by the Webster failure. They went to a quiet watering place, to a little cottage at Étretat, where he renewed work on his long-neglected story of Joan. He continued it that winter in Paris, pleasantly settled in the studio home of the artist Pomroy, on the rue de l'Université, beyond the Seine.

He still had great hope in the typesetter. Paige in Chicago had at last completed a machine, and it had been set up for a test in the office of the *Times-Herald*. For a time it seemed to do well enough, and Mr. Rogers, who had backed it to the extent of some fifty thousand dollars, made favorable reports.

But then came the decree that meant the end of every prospect. The machine had failed to stand the

test—the *Times-Herald* would have no more of it. Mr. Rogers withdrew from the venture and himself wrote a letter breaking the news to Mark Twain.

So it was that the great adventure which for nearly fifteen years had provided alternate hope and despair came to its final end. Clemens put the matter out of his life forever—scarcely mentioned it again, even to members of his family. It was a dead issue. It was only a pity that it had ever seemed a live one. Mark Twain once received a letter from an author who had written a book calculated to assist inventors, asking for his indorsement. He replied:

I have, as you say, been interested in patents and patentees. If your book tells how to exterminate inventors send me nine editions. Send them by express.

The work on *Joan* now went rapidly and well. Relieved of outside pressure and distracting interests, he could bend his entire thought and energy to his great story. Once more, as at Viviani, he was reading daily chapters to the family circle. The tale was drawing to an end now. Tragedy was closing in on the frail martyr—the farce of her trial was wringing their hearts. Susy would say, "Wait, wait till I get a handkerchief!" and on the night when the final pages had been read she wrote in her diary:

"To-night Joan of Arc was burned at the stake."

Arrangement for both serial and book publication of *Joan* was made with Harper & Brothers, and it began anonymously in the magazine. The author-

ship, however, was immediately suspected, for the story had touches in it that could have been given only by Mark Twain.

Clemens brought the family to America in May, and established them at Quarry Farm. Here he began preparing for one of the greatest platform ventures ever undertaken—nothing less than a lecture tour around the world, to restore his fallen fortunes. He decided to take Mrs. Clemens and one of the daughters along, and it fell to Clara to go. They left Elmira on the 14th of July, 1895. When the train drew away from the station they had a last glimpse of Susy, standing with the others under the electric light of the platform, waving them good-by.

They began the lectures at Cleveland, continuing westward, arriving at Vancouver a month later, after a succession of triumphs and with five thousand dollars surplus, which was forwarded to Mr. Rogers—an installment on a fund that was to wipe out the unpaid debts. Leaving Vancouver, Mark Twain gave a parting statement to the press. In it he said:

It has been reported that I sacrificed for the benefit of the creditors the property of the publishing firm whose financial backer I was, and that I am now lecturing for my own benefit.

This is an error. I intend the lectures as well as the property for the creditors. The law recognizes no mortgage on a man's brain, and a merchant who has given up all he has may take advantage of the laws of insolvency and start free again for himself. But I am not a business man, and honor is a harder master than the law. It cannot compromise for less than one hundred cents on the dollar and its debts never outlawed.

He added that he believed he could pay off the last debt within four years, and at sixty-four make a fresh start in life.

They sailed the afternoon of August 23, 1895, arriving three weeks later at Sydney, Australia, in a pouring rain, the breaking up of a fierce drought. Clemens announced that he had brought Australia good fortune, and should expect something in return.

He was not disappointed. Nowhere in his own country had Mark Twain and his party been more generously received than he was in that far-away South Pacific continent. He was able to send back money to Mr. Rogers at the rate of about a thousand dollars a week, though he was laid up with sickness more than once during the long tour.

In *Following the Equator*, Mark Twain has told us with great fullness and with sufficient faithfulness the story of his travels. We are only permitted the barest outline here. With the beginning of the year they reached Ceylon and passed over into India, that amazing world of gorgeous, swarming life and splendid pageantry. Everywhere they were received like royalty, overwhelmed with attentions and gifts; nowhere were the halls large enough to hold the lecture audiences. With the possible exception of General Grant's long trip in 1878 and 1879, there has hardly been a more splendid progress than Mark Twain's trip around the world.

They were about two months in India; then an English physician warned them to leave the country before the real heat set in. So they were off presently

for South Africa, touching at Madras and again at Ceylon, also at the island of Mauritius, arriving at Durban in May. In South Africa Mark Twain gave many readings, and found a special interest in visiting the prisoners captured from the Jameson raid, among them the well-known American, John Hays Hammond.

The Clemens party sailed for England on the 14th of July, 1896, a year to a day since they had left Elmira, arriving at Southampton on the 31st. Fourteen months before they had sailed from that port for America. Their circuit of the globe was complete.

XXX

THE PASSING OF SUSY—LONDON—PAYING THE DEBTS

IT HAD been arranged that Susy and Jean Clemens, with Katie Leary, an old family retainer, should join them in England within the fortnight. The travelers proceeded immediately to London and engaged a house in Guildford, a modest suburb.

They had expected news in England, but nothing satisfactory had arrived. Mrs. Clemens was worried. An American steamer came in, but instead of Katie and the children it brought only a letter explaining that Susy was slightly ill, not seriously, but hardly well enough to sail.

Mrs. Clemens, now alarmed, cabled for later news. A ship was sailing from Southampton the next noon. Clara and her mother began packing, in case the reply was unfavorable. A second message arrived, saying, "Wait for cablegram in the morning."

This was far from reassuring. At Southampton, they met a third message, which assured them that Susy's recovery would be long but certain. Mrs. Clemens and Clara immediately went aboard the steamer and sailed for America. Clemens remained behind to prepare for their return. In a memorandum which he made many years later he said:

That was the fifteenth of August, 1896. Three days later, when my wife and Clara were about halfway across the ocean, I was standing in our dining room, thinking of nothing in particular when a cablegram was put into my hand. It said, "Susy was peacefully released to-day."

Some of those who in later years wondered at Mark Twain's occasional attitude of pessimism and bitterness toward all creation, when his natural instinct lay all the other way, may find here some reason in his logic of gloom. Nearing the end of his fight against debt, with happiness once more apparently just ahead, he had been met by this. The dead girl had been his heart's pride; it was a year since he had seen her face; now he would never see it again. He was alone, absolutely alone, among strangers. In that day he could not even reach out to those upon the ocean, drawing hourly nearer to the heartbreak.

Mrs. Clemens and Clara, arriving in New York, were met by a tugboat, with Mr. Twichell and other friends of the family who had come down to break the sorrowful news. There was little need to say the words. Their presence there was enough.

Susy Clemens had died in the old Hartford home. She had been well for a time at Quarry Farm, but then her health seemed to decline. She worked continuously at her singing lessons, and overdid her strength. Then she went on a visit to the Warners', in Hartford, but did not rest, working harder than ever at her singing. Finally she was told that she must consult a physician. A doctor came, prescribed

some soothing remedies, and advised, for the sake of quiet, that she go over to her own home, a step away. Mrs. Crane and Charles Langdon came down from Elmira.

Susy did not improve, and her symptoms became alarming. A few days later the physician pronounced her ailment meningitis. Three days later, on the evening of Tuesday, August 18th, she died.

She had already been taken to Elmira when Mrs. Clemens and Clara arrived. They laid her beside the little brother who had died so long before, and ordered a headstone with some lines which they had found in Australia, written by Robert Richardson:

Warm summer sun, shine kindly here.
Warm southern wind, blow softly here.
Green sod above, lie light, lie light—
Good-night, dear heart, good-night, good-night.

Mrs. Clemens brought Clara and Jean back to England. The house in Guildford was given up and the family took another—this time in Chelsea—No. 23 Tedworth Square. They withdrew from all social life and scarcely a dozen persons even knew their address.

Clemens found a measure of respite in his literary work. A notebook entry for October 24, 1896, says:

Wrote the first chapter of the book to-day—"Around the World."

He worked pretty steadily, but his notebook entries reveal intermittent periods of fierce torture and self-reproach. Once he wrote:

I see now—as Livy always saw—that she had greatness in her, and that she herself was dimly conscious of it.

And now she is dead—and I can never tell her.

Work provided an increasing relief, and of course his natural turn for humorous expression found its customary vent, though it is noticeable that *Following the Equator* is more seriously written than his former books of travel. In a letter to Howells he refers to himself as a “mud image” with something in it which “has comedy fancies and finds pleasure in phrasing them.”

Once that winter a report got out that he was lying at the point of death. A representative of a New York paper ferreted out his address and appeared one day at Tedworth Square. He was a young man and naïvely exhibited his credentials. His orders read:

If Mark Twain very ill, five hundred words. If dead, send one thousand.

Clemens smiled grimly as he handed back the cable.

“You don’t need as much as that,” he said. “Just say that the report of my death has been grossly exaggerated”—a remark which flashed over the wire was next day amusing the world.

In April, Mark Twain spoke of his book as finished, but on May 18th (1897), he wrote in his notebook that he had “finished the book again—addition of 30,000 words.” His long work completed, he went out rather more freely, and one evening allowed a friend to take him to the Savage Club. There hap-

pened to be a majority of the membership committee present, and on motion Mark Twain was elected an honorary life member, a distinction which had been conferred on but three others—two explorers, Stanley and Nansen, and on the Prince of Wales. When this was announced to Mark Twain he said:

“Well, it must make the Prince feel mighty fine.”

They closed the Tedworth Square house and journeyed to Switzerland for the summer. At Weggis, a pretty village at the foot of the Rigi, on Lake Lucerne, they found accommodations in a neat and cheap *pension*, the Villa Bühlegg. Across the road on the lake front there was a bench under a large tree, where Clemens often went to rest and smoke. The tree to-day bears a small tablet, with the words, “Mark Twain Ruhe.” Down the shore, in the cottage of some working people, he secured as a study a quiet upper room with the windows opening to the lake. He began a number of stories there, but perhaps he was tired, or not in the vein, for they were never completed.

On the anniversary of Susy’s death Mrs. Clemens alone went aboard one of the small steamers which make the rounds of the lake, landed at a point that offered quiet invitation, and spent the day reading Susy’s letters. It was evening when she returned, and her husband, lonely and anxious, was waiting for her at the landing. He had spent the day writing the beautiful poem “In Memoriam,” a strain, lofty, tender, and dirgelike. It was published in *Harper’s Magazine* and is included in his collected works.

They went to Vienna for the winter, and their rooms at the Hôtel Métropole became a general meeting place of authors, journalists, diplomats, painters, scientists, men and women distinguished in every branch of literature, politics, and art. Mark Twain was the guest of honor at numerous banquets, and usually spoke—sometimes in English, sometimes in German, sometimes in an amusing combination of the two. A Vienna paper announced:

He has been fêted and dined from morn till eve. The homes of aristocracy are thrown open to him, counts and princes delight to do him honor, and foreign audiences hang upon the words that fall from his lips, ready to burst out any instant into roars of laughter.

In the midst of these new gayeties came the news of the death of Orion Clemens. Orion had died as he had lived—the dreamer, always with a new plan. He had seated himself one morning with pencil and paper to set down the details of his latest project, when death came to him kindly enough in this moment of new hope.

It was during this winter that Mark Twain discharged his great burden of debt. *Following the Equator* had come from the press in November, and had been well received. With the accumulation of royalty and the profits from his long lecture tour he was prepared to stand once more a free man before the world.

In November, 1897, he wrote to Mr. Rogers:

Let us begin on those debts. I cannot bear the weight any longer. It totally unfits me for work.

The beginning was made, and at the end of December he wrote again:

Land! we are glad to see those debts diminishing. For the first time in my life I am getting more pleasure from paying money out than pulling it in.

A month later enough money had accumulated to make the final payments to the creditors.

On the eve of sailing for Australia he had allowed four years in which to clear himself of his burdens; in less than two and a half years he had achieved that result.

Clemens had kept his financial progress a secret, but the payment of his debts was a public matter and was made the most of by the press. Headlines shouted it everywhere, and long editorials told the story. The failure of the typesetter, the collapse of the publishing firm, the trip around the world, the tragedy of Susy's death—these things were all reviewed, and his final triumph glorified.

It has been asserted, by those in a position to know least about the matter, that Henry Rogers lent, even gave, Mark Twain large sums, and pointed out opportunities whereby he could make heavily by speculation. No such statement is true. Mr. Rogers neither lent nor gave Mark Twain money, and he never allowed him to speculate when he could prevent it. He sometimes invested for him, but he never bought for him a share of stock that he did not have the money in hand to pay for in full—money belonging to, and earned by, Clemens himself.

What he did give to Mark Twain was his priceless counsel and time—gifts more precious than any mere sum of money—boons that Mark Twain could accept without humiliation. He did accept them, and was unceasingly grateful.

Not that he was always heedful of the advice. He was scarcely out of debt when he began negotiations with the great Austrian inventor, Szczepanik, for the American rights in a wonderful carpet-pattern machine, and, Sellers-like, was planning to organize a company with a capital of fifteen hundred million dollars to control the carpet-weaving industries of the world. He had the wisdom to write to Mr. Rogers about the great scheme, inviting the Standard Oil Company to furnish the capital. It appears not to have borne the test of the financier's scrutiny, and was presently heard of no more.

XXXI

SOCIAL VIENNA, AND HOME

MARK TWAIN was now the lion of the Austrian capital. Introductions to him were sought by persons of the most exclusive rank. It was the winter in London of twenty-five years before over again. Any afternoon, in his apartment at the Métropole, might be seen such famous ones as Vereschagin, Leschetizky, Dvorák, Lenbach, and Jokai, with diplomats and princes of many nations. The Queen of Rumania, Carmen Sylva, a poetess in her own right, was a devoted admirer and friend. Once, on the occasion of introducing a protégé, she wrote him:

I beg your pardon for being a bore to one I so deeply love and admire, to whom I owe days and days of forgetfulness of self and troubles, and the intensest of all joys—hero worship! People don't always realize what a happiness that is! God bless you for every beautiful thought you poured into my tired heart, and for every smile on a weary way.

CARMEN SYLVA.

Among the articles which Mark Twain wrote in Vienna was the one on the outbreak in the Austrian Reichsrath, an episode which in part he witnessed; another was "Concerning the Jews," one of the finest existing essays on Hebrew character.

But a story he wrote at this period will live when those others are but little remembered. It is the story of "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg"—a tale that in its own way takes its place with the half-dozen great English short stories of the world. Probably no one but Mark Twain ever conceived the idea of demoralizing a whole community—of making its "nineteen leading citizens" ridiculous by leading them into a cheap glittering temptation, and then having them expose themselves in the very sanctity of their own church.

At the new Krantz Hotel they passed another brilliant and busy winter, their drawing room acquiring the name of the "Second Embassy." With all his diversions, he managed to do a great deal of work, among other things developing a fanciful scheme—always a favorite of his—the appearance among human beings of a creature from another realm. "The Mysterious Stranger," begun in at least three forms, contains much of his best and most earnest writing. The version published after his death was the one completed (or nearly completed) at Vienna.¹

That Mark Twain found gratification in his successes we need not doubt. But the tragedy of Susy's death was never long forgotten. In a letter to Howells he wrote:

All these things might move and interest one. But how desperately more I have been moved to-night by the thought of a little old copy in the nursery of "At the Back of the North

¹The final brief, startling chapter was written some time after his return to America.

Wind." Oh, what happy days they were when that book was read, and how Susy loved it!

With the coming of spring, 1899, they left Vienna, followed to the station by a great crowd, who loaded their compartment with flowers and lingered on the platform, waving and cheering while the train pulled away. They spent several weeks in London, crossed over to Sweden in July, returning to London in October, where they took up residence in a small apartment, No. 30 Wellington Court. The Boer War was going on that winter, a "sordid and criminal war," Mark Twain called it, in which England was "in the wrong, but must be upheld." To Twichell he wrote:

I talk the war with both sides—always waiting until the other man introduces the topic. Then I say, "My head is with the British, but my heart and such rags of morals as I have are with the Boer—now we will talk unembarrassed, and without prejudice." And so we discuss and have no trouble.

I notice that God is on both sides in this war; thus history repeats itself. But I am the only person who has noticed this; everybody here thinks He is playing the game for this side, and for this side only.

With the summer of 1900 they removed to a beautiful old place just out of London, Dollis Hill House, then still a rural spot with wide spaces of grass, spreading oaks, and grazing sheep. At an earlier period Gladstone, a friend of the owner, had made it a favorite retreat.

"Dollis Hill comes nearer to being a paradise than any other home I ever occupied," Clemens wrote

when the summer was about ended, and Mrs. Clemens declared that she would like to remain there forever.

The closing of Dollis Hill marked the end of their European residence. Mark Twain, free from debt, ready once more to face old friends, was eager for his native land. They sailed for America October 6, 1900, bidding, as they hoped, a permanent good-by to foreign travel. They reached New York on the 15th, triumphantly welcomed after their long nine years of wandering.

It would be hard to exaggerate the stir which the newspapers and the public generally made over the homecoming of Mark Twain. He had met with misfortune and tragedy; he had received honors abroad, such as never perhaps before had been conferred on a private citizen; single-handed he had made his fight with debt, and won. Every newspaper printed again the story of his triumph:

"He had behaved like Walter Scott," says Howells, "as millions rejoiced to know who had not known how Walter Scott had behaved till they knew it was like Clemens."

He found a house at 14 West Tenth Street, a furnished house, obscure enough heretofore, but conspicuous now. All day long reporters were running there; committees arrived to offer him entertainments; editors came asking for contributions; lecture agents came with fabulous offers for him to appear for any number of nights he chose. He accepted more entertainment than was good for him, for everywhere

he was obliged to speak and the drain on him told. "His friends saw that he was wearing himself out," writes Howells, and certain it is that he grew thin and pale and had a hacking cough.

In the various utterances of this time Mark Twain's hearers recognized his more serious purpose. He still made them laugh, but he also made them think and stirred them to a truer gospel of patriotism.

He denounced the nations who had interfered in China and declared himself a "Boxer," under prevailing conditions. Toward the end of the winter he was asked to preside at a Lincoln Birthday celebration at Carnegie Hall, where he must introduce Col. Henry Watterson as the speaker of the evening.

"Think of it," he wrote Twichell, "two old rebels functioning there: I as president and Watterson as orator of the day. Things have changed somewhat in these forty years, thank God!"

Mark Twain was likely to be critical of the doings and shortcomings of mankind, including his own. He knew that he had all the weaknesses of the race, and he never spared himself when condemning the species.

"The damned human race," as he called it, was behaving very badly about the end of the year 1900. In New York City, unspeakable corruption was rampant; the Boers were being oppressed in South Africa; the natives were being murdered in the Philippines; Leopold of Belgium was massacring and mutilating the blacks in the Congo, and the allied powers in the cause of Christ were slaughtering Chinese. On New Year's Eve he wrote:

A GREETING FROM THE NINETEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I bring you the stately nation named Christendom, returning, bedraggled, besmirched, and dishonored, from pirate raids in Kiao-Chou, Manchuria, South Africa, and the Philippines, with her soul full of meanness, her pocket full of boodle, and her mouth full of pious hypocrisies. Give her soap and a towel, but hide the looking glass.

This was a sort of preliminary. Then, restraining himself no longer, he unburdened himself fully in an article for the *North American Review* entitled, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness." It was time that someone spoke the right word, and he was about the only one who could do it and be certain of universal audience. He took as his text some Christmas Eve clippings from the New York dailies. One of these declared that Christmas dawned in the United States "over a people full of hope and aspiration and good cheer," adding that such a condition insured contentment and happiness. Another clipping told of the situation in China, where indemnities for Boxer damages were collected at the rate of three hundred taels for each murder; also life for life, that is to say—"head for head"—adding, that in one district six hundred and eighty heads had been so collected. He printed the clippings in full, one following the other; then he said:

By happy luck we get all these glad tidings on Christmas Eve—just the time to enable us to celebrate the day with proper gayety and enthusiasm. Our spirits soar and we find we can even make jokes; taels I win, heads you lose.

Mark Twain never wrote anything more scorching, more penetrating in its sarcasm, more fearful in its revelation of injustice and hypocrisy, than this article "To the Person Sitting in Darkness." He even doubted the wisdom of printing it. Howells, however, advised its publication and thought it should be illustrated by Dan Beard, adding, "with such pictures as he made for the *Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, but you'd better hang yourself afterward."

Pictures were not required. It was published in the *North American Review* for February, 1901, as the opening article; after which the cyclone. Every paper in England and America printed editorials, with bitter denunciation or eager praise, according to their lights and convictions. At 14 West Tenth Street letters, newspaper clippings, documents poured in by the bushel—laudations, vituperations, vindications; no such tumult ever occurred in a peaceful literary home. Cartoons of him appeared. Rogers, in *Harper's Weekly*, pictured him as Tom Sawyer, assailed by a shower of snowballs, "having the time of his life."

Clemens did a second article entitled, "To My Missionary Critics," and the storm raged on. It took a long time for it to die, and for as much as a year afterward letters kept arriving filled with either praise or blame. Andrew Carnegie was one of those who highly approved. He wrote:

There is a new Gospel of St. Mark in the *North American* which I like better than anything I've read for many a day. . . . I count among my privileges in life that I know you, the author.

Not all ministers were against him. The associate pastor of the Everyday Church in Boston wrote:

I want to thank you for your matchless article in the current *North American*. It must make converts of well-nigh all who read it.

XXXII

"THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE"

IN JUNE, Clemens took the family to Saranac Lake, where they occupied a big log cabin, "The Lair," built in a remote and beautiful spot at the water's edge. They did not return to 14 West Tenth Street, but after a week at Elmira took up residence at Riverdale-on-the-Hudson, in the old Appleton home. All through their early European residence Mrs. Clemens had looked forward to living again in the Hartford home, but then Susy died and she never afterward felt that she could enter the familiar rooms. There were many pleasant neighbors at Riverdale, and it was near enough to New York to be easily accessible to old friends.

Clemens took an interest in New York City politics that fall and made a speech indicting for "high crimes and misdemeanors" the Tammany chief, Richard Croker. When the election was over and Seth Low, whom he had supported, was elected, he received a share of the credit. One paper celebrated him in verse:

Who killed Croker?
"I," said Mark Twain,
"I killed Croker,
I, the jolly joker!"

He was writing pretty steadily these days. The human race was furnishing him with ever so many inspiring subjects, and he found time to pour out his indignation, generally with no expectation of putting the result into print. He once told Howells, with the wild joy of his boyish heart, how Mrs. Clemens found some compensation, when kept to her room by illness, in the reflection that now she would not hear so much about the “damned human race.”

His energy was so great, his vitality so inexhaustible, his brain a dynamo that rested neither night nor day. On a yachting trip with Mr. Rogers he argued politics a good deal with “Tom” Reed, who, with all his training and practical knowledge of the subject, confessed himself outdone.

“Do you believe the things you say?” he asked at last, in his thin falsetto voice.

“Yes,” said Clemens, “some of them.”

“Well, you want to look out; if you go on this way, by and by you’ll get to believing nearly *everything* you say.”

At the end of May, 1902, Mark Twain was summoned by his native state to receive the degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Missouri. He went first to St. Louis, and was met at the train there by his old river instructor, Horace Bixby, as fresh, wiry, and capable as he had been forty-five years before. Clemens said:

“I have become an old man. You are still thirty-five.”

Clemens took the train for Hannibal, where he

spent five busy days. He visited the old home on Hill Street, and stood in the doorway, all dressed in white, while a battalion of picture-takers photographed him on the threshold of his youth.

"It all seems so small to me," he said, as he looked through the house. "A boy's home is a big place to him. I suppose if I should come back again ten years from now it would be the size of a bird house."

Of his own old companions but few remained. John Briggs, who as Joe Harper had found immortality in *Tom Sawyer*, was there; but "Huck" Blankenship was somewhere in the more distant West, and had so far amended his habits that he had become a justice of the peace.

They put Mark Twain into a carriage and drove him far and wide—to the cave, to Lover's Leap, where he had gathered flowers with Laura Hawkins—still living, a widow with silver hair.

On Sunday afternoon, with John Briggs, he walked over Holliday's Hill—the "Cardiff Hill" of *Tom Sawyer*. They calculated that nearly three thousand Sundays had passed since they had played there together, and now here they were once more—their hair white, but the hills still fresh and green, the river still sweeping by and rippling in the sun. Looking across to the low-lying Illinois shore, and to the green islands where they had played, and to Lover's Leap on the south, the man who had been Sam Clemens said:

"John, that is one of the loveliest sights I ever

saw. Down there by the island is the place we used to swim, and yonder is where a man was drowned, and over there is where the steamboat sank. Down there on Lover's Leap is where the Millerites put on their robes one night to go to heaven. None of them went that night, but I suppose most of them have gone now."

And so they talked on, of this thing and that, touching lovingly and lingeringly that most beautiful of all our possessions—the only one we are sure of—the past.

"Sam," said John, when they parted, "this is probably the last time we shall meet on this earth. God bless you. Perhaps somewhere we shall renew our friendship."

"John," was the answer, "this day has been worth thousands to me. We were like brothers once, and I feel that we are the same now. Good-by, John. I'll try to meet you—somewhere."

Clemens left next day for Columbia, where the university is located. At each place where the train stopped crowds were waiting to cheer and wave, and to offer him flowers. Sometimes he spoke a few words, but oftener, his eyes filled with tears, his voice refused to come.

There is something essentially dramatic in official recognition by one's native state—the return of the lad who has set out unknown to battle with life, and who, having conquered, is invited back to be crowned. No other honor, however great and spec-

tacular, is quite the same, for there is in it a pathos and a completeness that are elemental and stir emotions as old as life itself.

It was on the 4th of June, 1902, that Mark Twain received his degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Missouri. Gardner Lathrop read a brief statement, introducing him as "America's foremost author and best-loved citizen."

Clemens stepped to the center of the stage and paused. He seemed to be in doubt as to whether he should make a speech or simply express his thanks and retire. Suddenly, without a signal, the great audience rose and stood in silence at his feet. He bowed, but he could not speak. Then that vast assembly began a peculiar chant, spelling out the word "M-i-s-s-o-u-r-i," a pause between each letter. It was tremendously impressive. He had recovered himself by the time the chant ended, and when they demanded, as they did immediately, a speech, he made them one—the kind of speech he could make better than anyone living, full of quaint phrasing, happy humor, gentle and dramatic pathos.

Returning to St. Louis, Samuel Clemens was invited to attend the rechristening of the harbor boat. It had been named the *St. Louis*; it was now to be the *Mark Twain*. A short trip was made on it by the christening party, which included Governor Francis, the Count and Countess Rochambeau, and Marquis de Chambrun, who had come over for the dedication of the World's Fair ground. Mark Twain himself was invited to take the wheel, and the others

collected in the pilot house behind him, feeling that it was a memorable occasion. Presently he saw a little ripple running out from the shore across the bow. In the old days he could have told whether it indicated a bar there or was only caused by the wind. Now he was not sure. Turning to the pilot languidly, he said:

“I feel a little tired; I guess you better take the wheel.”

XXXIII

LAST SUMMER AT ELMIRA—THE PASSING OF OLIVIA CLEMENS

THEY engaged for the summer a cottage at York Harbor, Maine. Howells was at Kittery Point, not far away; everything promised a happy summer. To her sister Mrs. Clemens wrote:

We are in the midst of pines. They come right up about us and the house is so high and the roots of the trees are so far below the veranda that we are right in the branches.

She was happy there during those early weeks of their stay; but, too active, perhaps, for her strength suddenly gave way. In his notebook Clemens made the following entry:

Tuesday, August 12, 1902. At 7 A. M. Livy taken violently ill. Telephoned and Dr. Lambert was here in $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. She could not breathe—was likely to stifle. Also she had severe palpitation. She believed she was dying. I also believed it.

Her condition remained critical, though she seemed to improve as the weeks passed. In October, they brought her to Riverdale in an invalid car.

It was a winter of the deepest anxiety. Mrs. Clemens could see no one longer than a few minutes, and was allowed to hear nothing in the way of disturbing news. When, as presently happened, Jean Clemens was stricken by pneumonia, they had to

invent ways to account for her doings. The burden fell upon Clara Clemens, whose presence was soothing to the patient and whose imagination provided pleasant gossip, such as she knew her mother would enjoy. Mark Twain once said that never before in her life had Clara told her mother an untruth, and that one might almost say that never afterward did she tell her anything else.

It was our daily protection from disaster. The mother never doubted Clara's word. Clara could tell her the largest improbabilities without exciting any suspicion, whereas if I tried to market even a small and simple one the case would have been different. I was never able to get a reputation like Clara's.

It was fortunate that Jean had been forbidden to see her mother at all, and Clemens himself was allowed only two minutes out of each day, during which he could stand at the foot of the bed and say a few words to the invalid. He spent his time largely in waiting for these two-minute periods, and more than once was disappointed when the time came, the nurse forbidding his entrance. Often he wrote affectionate little messages and pushed them under the door. This was permitted, and Mrs. Clemens was sometimes allowed to answer them.

Mark Twain had been at home well on toward three years, but his popularity showed no signs of diminishing. A constant tide of letters flowed in, letters of sympathy, of love, of hearty indorsement. A department in *St. Nicholas* magazine offered a prize for a caricature drawing of some well-known

man. There were one or two of prominent politicians and capitalists, and there was literally a wheelbarrow load of Mark Twain. When he was informed of this he wrote:

No tribute could have pleased me more than that, the friendship of the children.

Mrs. Clemens's health improved with the return of warm weather. In time she was able to leave her room. Howells tells how one sunny afternoon he and Clemens sat on the grass at Riverdale and "looked up toward a balcony where by and by a lovely presence made itself visible, as if it had stooped there from a cloud. A hand frailly waved a handkerchief." It was a greeting to Howells—the last he would ever receive from her.

She was able to make the trip to Elmira in June, and there during three peaceful months spent her days reclining on the wide veranda, looking down the grassy slope to the drowsy city and the distant hills. A part of the time Mark Twain worked in the old study that had been consecrated by Huck and Tom and the wandering Prince. *A Dog's Tale*, completed that summer, was the last writing he would ever do there. One day he wrote in his notebook:

To-day I placed flowers on Susy's grave—for the last time, probably—and read the words,
"Good-night, dear heart, good-night, good-night."

This was October 3d. On the 24th, they sailed, with Clara and Jean and Katie Leary, for Italy. Mrs.

Clemens stood the voyage remarkably well, and they arrived in Florence full of hope. They had engaged the Villa Quarto, a fine old Italian palace in an ancient garden, looking out over Florence toward Vallombrosa and the Chianti hills. It was a beautiful spot, and Mrs. Clemens's health improved there for a time, in spite of dull, depressing weather; so much so that in May, when the warmth and sun came back, Clemens and Jean went driving about the country seeking a villa that they might buy as a permanent home.

There came a day when she was brought out on the terrace in a wheel chair to see the wonder of the early Italian summer. She had been a prisoner so long that she was almost overcome with the delight of it all—the more so, perhaps, in the feeling that she might so soon be leaving it.

Jean and her father were still on the search for a villa, and one golden Sunday morning, the 5th of June, they discovered one which promised to fill most of their requirements. They came home full of enthusiasm concerning it, and in his mind Clemens had decided on the purchase. In the corridor they met Clara, who said:

"She is better to-day than she has been for three months." Then quickly under her breath, "*Unberufen*," which the others also added, hastily, superstitiously.

Mrs. Clemens was, in fact, bright and cheerful. She was anxious to hear all about the new property, and urged her husband to remain—a forbidden

privilege, but permitted because she was feeling so well. Their talk was as it had been in the old days. Once during it he reproached himself, as he had so often done, and asked forgiveness for the tears he had brought into her life. Summoned to go at last, he chided himself for having remained so long; but she said there was no harm, and kissed him, saying, "You will come back?" And he answered, "Yes, to say good-night," meaning at half-past nine, as was the permitted custom. He stood a moment at the door, throwing kisses to her, and she returning them, her face bright with smiles.

He was so full of hope—they were going to be happy again. Long ago he had been in the habit of singing jubilee songs to the children. He went upstairs now, to the piano, and played and sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and "My Lord He Calls Me." He stopped then, but Jean, who had come in, asked him to go on. Mrs. Clemens from her room heard the music, and said to Katie Leary:

"He is singing a good-night carol to me."

The music ceased presently, and a moment later she asked to be lifted up. Almost in that instant life slipped away without a sound.

Clemens, just then coming to say good-night, saw a little group gathered about her bed. He went and bent over and looked into her face, surprised that she did not greet him. He heard Clara ask:

"Katie, is it true? Oh, Katie, *is* it true?"

Then he realized.

That night in his notebook he wrote:

THE PASSING OF OLIVIA CLEMENS 237

At a quarter past nine this evening, she that was the life of my life passed to the relief and peace of death, after twenty-two months of unjust and unearned suffering. I first saw her thirty-seven years ago, and now I have looked upon her face for the last time. . . . I was full of remorse for things done and said in these thirty-four years of married life, that have hurt Livy's heart.

And to Howells a few days later:

To-day, treasured in her worn old Testament, I found a dear and gentle letter from you, dated Far Rockaway, September 13, 1896, about our poor Susy's death. I am tired and old; I wish I were with Livy.

They brought her to America, and from the house, and the rooms where she had been made a bride bore her to her grave beside Susy and little Langdon.

XXXIV

REMAKING A HOME—AT PIER 70

THERE was an extra cottage on the Gilder Place, at Tyringham, Massachusetts, and Clemens took his daughters there for the rest of that sad summer. In the autumn he leased a house in New York City, on Fifth Avenue at the corner of Ninth Street, No 21. The home furniture was brought from Hartford, unwrapped, and established in its new environment. He wrote:

We have not seen it for thirteen years. Katie Leary, our old housekeeper, who has been in our service more than twenty-four years, cried when she told me about it to-day.

Mark Twain did some work at Tyringham—one or two articles, and the beginning, at least, of *Eve's Diary*, which, in spite of its amusing aspects, is full of tenderness, and in the most reverential sense conveys his love—his adoration—for the one he had laid away. Adam's single comment at the end, "Wheresoever she was, there was Eden," was his own comment, and perhaps the most beautiful line he ever wrote.

The house at 21 Fifth Avenue with the Hartford furnishings distributed through it was a suitable

setting for Mark Twain. But it was lonely for him. He added presently a great Æolian orchestrelle, with a variety of music for his different moods. He had an ear for melody and stately rhythmic measures.

He went out little that winter, usually to the homes of old and intimate friends. At moments he relieved himself by writing—protests, mainly, against existing evils or unhappy conditions.

Among them was a "War Prayer," supposed to have been uttered by a mysterious, white-robed stranger who enters a church during those ceremonies that precede the marching of a nation's armies to battle. The minister had prayed for victory—a prayer which the stranger interprets as a petition that the enemies' lands shall be laid waste, his soldiers torn by shells, his people turned out roofless to wander their desolated fields in rags and hunger. It was a scathing arraignment of war, a prophecy which has since been literally fulfilled.

Much of what he wrote at this time he did not print. When he had produced something especially violent he read it to a friend who dropped in, or mailed it to Twichell, who would at least understand him. In a letter accompanying one manuscript he wrote:

I *have* to work my bile off whenever it gets to where I can't stand it, but I can work it off on you economically, because I don't have to make it suit me. It may not suit you, but that isn't any matter; I am not writing it for that. I have used you as an equilibrium-restorer more than once in my time, and shall continue, I guess. . . . I can't use Howells; he is busy and old and lazy, and won't stand it. I dasn't use Clara; there's things I

have to say which she wouldn't put up with—a very dear little ash-cat, but has claws.

And so—you're It.

For the summer of 1905 he took a summer home at Dublin, New Hampshire—"Lonetree Hill," on the Monadnock Slope. It was a charming locality, and for neighbors there were artists, literary people, and those of kindred pursuits, among them a number of old friends. Here he finished *Eve's Diary*, and a large part of a fantastic tale, a sort of scientific revel, or revelry, entitled "3000 Years Among the Microbes—by a Microbe." It was a satire, of course—Gulliver's Lilliput outdone. He never finished it—never *could* finish it, for it ran off into amazing by-paths that led nowhere and the tale was lost. Its chief mission was to divert him during those days and nights when he would otherwise have brooded upon his loneliness.

Mark Twain was nearing seventy—the scriptural limitation of life—and the returns were coming in. Some one of the old group was dying all the time—the roll call returned only a scattering answer. Of his oldest friends, John Hay, Sir Henry Irving, and Charles Henry Webb all died that year. He felt that he had not much left to celebrate, and when Colonel George Harvey, head of Harper & Brothers, proposed a birthday dinner in his honor Clemens suggested a small Bohemian assembly in some snug place, with Howells, Rogers, Twichell, and such other kindred souls as still remained.

Colonel Harvey had something different in mind.

He felt that the attainment of seventy years by America's most distinguished private citizen was an occasion for general rejoicing. The actual birthday fell on the 30th of November, but the dinner was set for five days later, in order not to conflict with Thanksgiving celebrations. Invitations were sent to practically every writer of distinction in America, and to many abroad. Nearly two hundred accepted. The others returned tender messages of regret.

What an occasion it was! the flower of American literature assembled to do honor to its chief. When Colonel Harvey presented William Dean Howells, who after a brief poem introduced the guest of the evening with the words, "I will not say, O King, live forever, but, O King, live as long as you like," and Mark Twain stood before them, his snow-white hair gleaming, his face filled with that youth which never died, it seemed that the whole world suddenly spoke out in a voice of welcome. With a great tumult the throng rose, a billow of life, the white waving napkins flying foamlike on its crest.

He must have realized the drama of that moment—the marvel of it—and flashed a swift view backward over the long way he had come, to stand, as he had himself once expressed it, "for a single splendid moment on the Alps of fame, outlined against the sun." He must have remembered, for when he came to speak he turned back to the morning of life, to his very first banquet, sketched the meagerness of the little hamlet that had seen his birth, the flickering uncertainty of his early years, told it playfully, de-

lightfully, until his hearers laughed and shouted, but tears were never far beneath the surface. He spoke of his habits of life, his irregularities of sleep and diet; how he had attained seventy by faithfully sticking to a scheme of living that would kill anybody else. Then at the last he reached the unforgettable close:

Threescore years and ten!

It is the scriptural statute of limitations. After that you owe no active duties; for you the strenuous life is over. You are a time-expired man, to use Kipling's military phrase: You have served your term, well or less well, and you are mustered out. You are an honorary member of the republic, you are emancipated, compulsions are not for you, nor any bugle call but "lights out." You pay the time-worn duty bills if you choose, or decline if you prefer—and without prejudice—for they are not legally collectible.

The previous-engagement plea, which in forty years has cost you so many twinges, you can lay aside forever; on this side of the grave you will never need it again. If you shrink at thought of night, and winter, and the late homecomings from the banquet and the lights and laughter through the deserted streets—a desolation which would not remind you now, as for a generation it did, that your friends are sleeping and you must creep in a-tiptoe and not disturb them, but would only remind you that you need not tiptoe, you can never disturb them more—if you shrink at the thought of these things you need only reply, "Your invitation honors me and pleases me because you still keep me in your remembrance, but I am seventy; seventy, and would nestle in the chimney corner, and smoke my pipe, and read my book, and take my rest, wishing you well in all affection, and that when you in your turn shall arrive at Pier 70 you may step aboard your waiting ship with a reconciled spirit, and lay your course toward the sinking sun with a contented heart."

XXXV

MARK TWAIN ARRANGES FOR HIS BIOGRAPHY

FROM this point our history becomes a personal narrative in which the writer himself has a part.

I first saw Mark Twain on New Year's Eve, 1901, at the Players' Club, where he made the Founder's Night address with which some distinguished member always closes the old year and begins the new. As I entered the club he was sitting on a couch near the dining room, talking earnestly to someone, who I think did not enter my consciousness at all. I saw only the crown of white hair and heard the slow, measured speech of the man who had been my literary idol since childhood. I remember that I was surprised to see how frail and old he looked. I did not realize that this was a temporary condition, due to a period of poor health and heavy social demands. I have no idea how long I stood there watching him, but he rose presently and came directly toward me. A year before I had done what new writers were always doing—I had sent him a book I had written, and he had done what he was always doing—acknowledged it with a kindly letter. I now made my thanks an excuse for addressing him. It warmed me to hear him say that he remembered the book, though at the time I confess I thought it doubtful.

It was the following spring that I next saw him—at an afternoon gathering, and the memory of that occasion is chiefly important because I met Mrs. Clemens there for the only time, and, like all who met her, however briefly, felt the gentleness and beauty of her spirit.

It was three years before I saw Mark Twain again, though a sort of acquaintance had progressed between us. I was writing the *Life of Thomas Nast* and found among the material letters from Mark Twain. I was anxious to use them, and wrote, asking permission, which was generously granted. Then came the night of his seventieth birthday dinner, with an opportunity for a brief exchange of words. I sent him the book next day, with no thought of hearing from it again.

Something less than a month later I was invited to join in a small private dinner to be given to Mark Twain at the Players', in celebration of his having been elected an honorary member of that club. I was in the club a day or two in advance of the date, and David Munro, of the *North American Review*, a man whose gentle and kindly nature made him "David" to all who knew him, greeted me joyfully, his eyes eager with something he knew I would wish to hear. He had been chosen, he said, to propose the dinner to Mark Twain, and had found him propped up in bed, beside him a copy of the Nast book. I suspect now that David, out of his generous heart, prompted Mark Twain to speak of the book,

and that the result lost nothing in David's eager retelling.

The dinner of January 3, 1906, remains as a memory apart from other dinners. The picture of the Players' private dining room that night is still clear to me: the long table expanded to its limit, the unique electric chandelier above it, the rich, shadowy walls. It is a room that has known much distinguished entertainment; it has even made history. I remember the room that night chiefly as background. What I really see is the assemblage around the gleaming table. Brander Matthews presided; and the knightly Frank Millet, who would one day go down on the *Titanic*, was there, and Gilder, and Munro, and David Bispham, and Robert Reid, with others of their sort—twenty-five, I think, in all. It so happened that my seat was nearly facing the guest of the evening, who, by a custom of the Players, is placed at the side and not at the distant end of the long table. Regarding him at leisure, I saw that he was no longer frail and thin, as when I had first met him. He had an alert, rested look; his complexion had the tints of a miniature painting. Lit by the glow of the shaded candles, with the dusk richness of the walls behind him, he made a figure of striking beauty. I could not take my eyes from it, for it stirred in me the farthest memories. I saw the interior of a farmhouse sitting room in the Middle West where, a boy of eight, I had first heard the name of Mark Twain, and where night after night a group gathered around the evening

lamp to hear the story of the "Innocents" on their long pilgrimage. To Charles Harvey Genung, who sat next to me, I whispered something of this, and how, during the thirty-six years since then, no one had meant to me quite what Mark Twain had meant. Now here he was, just across the table. It was a fairy tale come true.

Genung said, "You should write his life."

It seemed to me no more than a pleasant remark, and as such I put it aside, saying that someone of larger experience and closer association must already have been given the task. Then the speaking began—delightful, intimate speaking—during which the matter passed entirely from my mind. Later in the evening, when we had left our seats and were drifting about the table, I found a chance to say a word to our guest about his story of Joan, which I had recently reread. To my happiness, he detained me while he recalled the long-ago incident—the stray leaf from Joan's life blown to him by the wind—which had awakened his interest not only in the martyred girl, but in all literature. I think we broke up soon after and descended to the lower rooms. Perhaps it was the brief sympathy established by the name of Joan of Arc; perhaps it was only Genung's insistent purpose; whatever it was, there came an impulse, in the instant of bidding good-by to our guest of honor, which prompted me to say:

"May I call to see you, Mr. Clemens, some day?"

And something—to this day I wonder what it was—prompted him to answer:

"Yes, come soon."

This was on Wednesday night, or rather on Thursday morning, for it was past midnight, and a day later I made an appointment with his secretary to call on Saturday.

I can truly say that I set out with no real hope of success. I know I did not have the courage even to confide in Genung that I was going. I arrived at 21 Fifth Avenue, and a few moments later was ascending the dim stairs, wondering why I had come on so futile an errand, trying to think of an excuse to offer for having come at all.

He was propped up in bed—a regal bed from a dismantled Italian palace—sitting, as was his habit, with his back to the foot of the bed, so that he might have always before him the rich carved beauty of the headboard. He was delving through a copy of *Huckleberry Finn* in search of a paragraph concerning which some unknown correspondent had inquired. As I entered the room he began commenting rather caustically on this correspondent and on miscellaneous letter-writing in general. He pushed the cigars toward me, and the talk blended into gossip of other matters. By and by I told him what so many thousands had told him before, what he had meant to me, recalling my impressions of that large black-and-gilt book, with its wonderful pictures and adventures, the story of *The Innocents Abroad*. Very likely it bored him, he had heard it so often, and he was willing enough, I dare say, to let me change the subject, and I thanked him for the kindly word

which David Munro had brought. Then presently I found myself saying that out of his encouragement had grown a hope—though certainly it was something less—that I might some day undertake a book with Mark Twain as the subject. I expected the chapter to end at this point, and the silence which followed seemed long and ominous.

He said, at last, that at various times through his life he had been preparing autobiographical chapters, but that he had wearied of the undertaking and put it aside. He added one or two other general remarks, then turning those piercing agate-blue eyes directly upon me, he said:

“When would you like to begin?”

There was a dresser with a large mirror behind him. I happened to catch my reflection in it, and I vividly recollect saying to it, mentally: “This is not true; it is only one of many similar dreams. But even in a dream one must answer, and I said:

“Whenever you like. I can begin now.”

He was always eager in any new undertaking.

“Very good,” he replied. “The sooner, then, the better. Let’s begin while we are in the humor. The longer you postpone a thing the less likely you are ever to get at it.”

I have said that this was on Saturday. My family was in the country; it would require a day or two to get established in the city. I mentioned this, and asked if Tuesday, January 9th, would be too soon to begin. He agreed that Tuesday would do, and inquired something about my plan of work. I replied

that in similar undertakings I had employed a stenographer to take notes, dictated by the subject himself; such notes to be supplemented with every variety of material obtainable—letters, journals, and what not. He said:

“I think I should enjoy dictating to a stenographer, with someone to prompt me and to act as audience. The room adjoining this was fitted up for my study. My manuscripts and notes and private books and many of my letters are there; and there is a trunkful or two of such things in the attic. I seldom use the room myself. I do my writing and reading in bed. I will turn that room over to you for this work. Whatever you need will be brought to you. We can have the dictation here in the morning and you can put in the rest of the day to suit yourself. You can have a key and come and go as you please.”

That was his regal way; he did nothing by halves—nothing without unquestioning confidence and prodigality. He got up and showed me the lovely luxury of the study, with its treasures of material. I still did not believe it true; it had all the atmosphere of a dream, and I have no distinct recollection of how I came away. I know that, by and by, back at the Players', I was confiding the marvel of it to Charles Harvey Genung, who professed to believe it all and pretended that he was not surprised.

On Tuesday morning, January 9, 1906, I brought a capable stenographer to 21 Fifth Avenue, and the work began.

Mark Twain, however, had been revolving our

plans and now proposed to double the value of our employment by letting his dictations continue his earlier autobiographical chapters. He would pay the stenographer, he said, and own the notes, allowing me free use of them as material. He added that he would like to dictate as his fancy prompted, without trying to follow any particular biographical order. It would be easy enough to arrange the chronology later. He said I might suggest subjects for dictation, or at any time ask questions. I assented to everything, of course, and we set to work without further prologue.

As on my former visit, he was in bed when we arrived, propped against great, snowy pillows, though clad now in a rich dressing gown. He loved this loose luxury and ease, and found it conducive to thought. A small table beside him held his pipes, cigars, pencils, etc., also a reading lamp, the soft light of which brought out his brilliant coloring and the gleam of his snowy hair. There was daylight, too, but it was a dull winter daylight from the north, while the walls of the room were a deep, unreflecting red. Altogether the picture was unforgettable.

He dictated that morning certain memories of the Comstock mine; then drifted back to his childhood, closing with some comment on current affairs. It was all absorbingly interesting; his quaint, unhurried fashion of speech; the unconscious habits of his delicate hands; the play of his features as his fancies and phrases passed in mental review and were accepted or waved aside. We were watching one of the

great literary creators of his time in the very process of his architecture. When he turned at last and asked the time we were all amazed that two hours and more had slipped away.

"And how much I have enjoyed it!" he said. "It is the ideal plan for this kind of work. Narrative writing is always disappointing. The moment you pick up a pen you begin to lose the spontaneity of the personal relation, which contains the very essence of interest. With shorthand dictation one can talk as if he were at his own dinner table—always a most inspiring place. I expect to dictate all the rest of my life, if you good people are willing to come and listen to it."

The dictations thus begun continued steadily and with increasing charm. We never knew what he was going to talk about, and it was seldom that *he* knew, until the moment of beginning. It was always delightful, always amusing, tragic, or instructive, and the change from one phase to another was likely to be instantaneous. I felt myself the most fortunate biographer in the world, as undoubtedly I was, though not just in the way I first imagined.

It was not for several weeks that I began to realize that these marvelous dictated chapters bore only an atmospheric relation to history—that they were aspects of biography rather than its veritable narrative. The creator of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn had been elaborating old incidents or inventing new ones too long to stick to history now—to be able to separate romance from reality. Furthermore,

his memory—always uncertain as to personal happenings—had become even less reliable with age. He realized this, and once, in his whimsical gentle way, remarked:

“When I was younger I could remember anything, whether it happened or not; but I am getting old, and soon I shall remember only the latter.”

Yet it was his constant purpose to be faithful to fact, and especially did he make no effort to put himself in a good light. Indeed, if you wanted to know the worst of Mark Twain you had only to ask him for it. He would give it to the last syllable—worse than the worst, for his imagination would magnify it and adorn it with new iniquities; and if he gave it again, or a dozen times, he would improve upon it each time, until the thread of history was almost impossible to trace through the marvel of his embroidery.

In the talks I had with him when the stenographer was gone I got much that was of great value. Imagination was then temporarily dispossessed and he spoke without thought of literary or dramatic effect. I seldom asked him a question during the dictations, or interrupted him in any way, though he had asked me to stop him when I found him misstating some fact known to me. At first I lacked the courage to point out a mistake, at the moment, and cautiously mentioned the matter when he had finished. Then he would be likely to say:

“Why didn’t you stop me? Why did you let me go

on making a jackass of myself, when you could have saved me?"

Then, of course, I was sorry, and apologized, and in a moment the sky was clear again. There was generally a humorous complexion to the dictations, whatever the subject.

Perhaps I should have said sooner that he smoked continuously during the dictations. His cigars were of that delicious fragrance which belongs to domestic tobacco. They were strong and inexpensive, and it was only his early training that made him prefer them. Admiring friends used to send him costly imported cigars, but he rarely touched them and they were consumed by visitors. He often smoked a pipe, and preferred it to be old and violent. Once, soon after we began our work, he bought a new expensive brier root, which he handed to me, saying:

"I'd like to have you smoke that a year or two, and when it gets so you cannot stand it maybe it will suit me."

I did smoke it "a year or two," then handed it back to him, but it was never strong enough, and he eventually made my title to it complete.

The house at 21 Fifth Avenue was an interesting place. There was a perpetual string of callers. He saw as many as he could, but of course his days were very full. Now and then his secretary would be allowed to admit a visitor who was evidently sincere and not too heavily charged with eloquence. Of these there came one day a very gently spoken woman who had promised that she would stay but a moment

and say no more than a few words. It was the morning hour before the dictations, and he received her, quite correctly clad, in his beautiful dressing robe and propped against his pillows. She kept her contract to the letter, but when she rose to go she said, in a voice of deepest reverence:

"May I kiss your hand?"

It was a delicate situation and it might easily have been made ludicrous. Denial would have hurt her. As it was he lifted his hand—a small, exquisite hand it was—with the gentle dignity and poise of a king, and she touched her lips to it with what was certainly adoration. Then as she went she said:

"How God must love you!"

"I hope so," he said, softly, and did not even smile. But after she had gone he could not help adding, in a quaint, half-pathetic voice, "I guess she hasn't heard of our strained relations."

Mark Twain made a number of speeches that winter. He spoke one Sunday afternoon for the Y. M. C. A., and the riot caused by a multitude that demanded entrance and tried to stampede the doors nearly broke up the meeting. In April, for the benefit of the Robert Fulton Society, he delivered his "farewell lecture"—the last lecture, he said, where anyone would have to pay to hear him.

An editorial in the *Evening Mail* declared that things had reached a point where Mark Twain was "expected either to attend every public meeting and banquet or to contribute one of his inimitable letters of advice and encouragement."

XXXVI

MONADNOCK—BILLIARDS—WASHINGTON— THE OXFORD DEGREE

MAY came, and with it another summer journey to the Monadnock slopes—this time to the Upton House, which stands on the edge of a beautiful beech forest, well up the mountain side, with a noble view of the twin peaks, the far-stretching forest, shimmering lakes, and distant blue hills.

"I think I shall like it," he said, "when I get acquainted with it and get it classified and labeled. It ought to be an inspiring place."

So the dictations were continued on the long veranda, and he was generally ready for them, dressed all in white, pacing up and down before that panoramic background. When it stormed we moved into the great living room, where, at one end, there was a fireplace with blazing logs, and at the other the great orchestrelle, which had been freighted up those mountain heights.

In time Mark Twain became lonely in Dublin. After the brilliant winter the contrast was very great. In one of his dictations he said:

"I feel for Adam and Eve now, for I know how it was with them. I am existing, broken-hearted, in a Garden of Eden. . . . The Garden of Eden I now

know was an unendurable solitude. I know that the advent of the serpent was a welcome change—anything for society.”

He had never outgrown his love for cats, and from a neighbor had rented for the summer a trio of kittens. He didn't wish to own them, for then he would have to leave them behind, uncared for; so he preferred to rent them and pay sufficiently to insure their subsequent care. These kittens he called Sackcloth and Ashes—Ashes being the joint name for two who were so nearly alike that they could not be told apart. Their gambols always amused him. He would stop any time in the midst of dictation to enjoy them. Once, as he was about to enter the screen door that led into the hall, two of the kittens ran up in front of him and stood waiting. With grave politeness he opened the door, made a low bow, stepped back, and said:

“Walk in, gentlemen. I always give precedence to royalty.”

And the kittens marched in, tails in the air.

A great deal of public interest was now aroused by the promised publication of some of his autobiographical chapters which he had been persuaded by Colonel Harvey to give to the *North American Review*. With the money received for these chapters, thirty thousand dollars, Clemens decided to build a summer home on some property which I had bought for him at Redding, Connecticut, earlier in the year.

He had not seen this property. I owned a small place in Redding, and, once hearing me speak of it,

he had been taken with one of his enthusiasms and asked me to obtain such a place for him. I did so, securing an old house, and later, when he decided to build, added to the land, acquiring in all something like three hundred acres, including a beautiful hill-top where it was decided by Clara Clemens—the only one of the family to visit the place—that the house should stand. Howell's son, John Mead Howells, a distinguished architect, was engaged to draw the plans. Clemens specified only that he wanted a big living room with a place for the orchestrille, and a good-sized billiard room, the prevailing color of which was to be red.

With our return to New York there began for me a period of closer association with Mark Twain. Up to that time our relations had been chiefly of a literary nature; they were now to become personal as well.

It happened in this way: Mark Twain, as we have seen, had never outgrown his love for billiards and had made a billiard room one of the chief specifications for his new house. He had not owned a table, however, since the closing of the Hartford home, fifteen years before. Mrs. Henry Rogers now proposed to present him with a new one, for Christmas, but when he heard of the plan he could not wait, and delicately hinted that if he had the table "right now" he could begin to use it sooner. So with Mr. Rogers he went one day to the billiard ware-rooms and selected a handsome combination table, the best that money could buy. He was greatly excited over the prospect. His former bedroom was carefully

measured to be certain that it was large enough for billiard purposes; his bed was moved into the study; the new table arrived and was set in place.

Clemens, meantime, with one of his sudden impulses, had decided to spend the winter in Egypt, on the Nile. He first mentioned this on the morning when we renewed the New York dictations, which also happened to be the morning that the new billiard table arrived. When the dictation ended he said:

"Have you any special place to lunch to-day?"

I replied that I had not.

"Lunch here," he said, "and we'll try the new billiard table."

I confessed that I knew very little of the game, which was eminently true.

"No matter," he answered; "the poorer you play the better I shall like it."

So I remained for luncheon, and afterward we began the first game ever played on the "Christmas table." He taught me a game in which caroms and pockets both count, and gave me heavy odds. He beat me, but it was a riotous, rollicking experience, the beginning of a closer relation between us. Presently he said:

"I'm not going to Egypt. There was a man here yesterday who said it was bad for bronchitis, and besides, it's too far away from this billiard table."

We played most of the afternoon. I had beginner's luck—"nigger luck," as he called it—and he was kept sweating, and swearing feverishly, to win. Once

I made a great fluke—a carom followed by most of the balls dropping into the pocket.

“Well,” he said, “when you pick up that cue this damn table drips at every pore.”

After that the morning dictations became of secondary interest. Like a boy, he was looking forward to the afternoon of play, and it never seemed to come quickly enough to suit him. I remained regularly for luncheon, and he was inclined to cut the courses short, that he might sooner get upstairs to the billiard room. He did not eat the midday meal himself, but he would come down and walk up and down the dining room, talking that marvelous talk which I was always trying to remember. Once when he had been discussing something with great earnestness he suddenly noticed the luncheon was about over.

“Now,” he said, “we’ll proceed to more serious matters—it’s your—shot.”

He wrote to Mrs. Rogers that a billiard table was better than the doctors:

The games begin right after luncheon, daily, and continue until midnight, with 2 hours’ intermission for dinner and music.

My game improved with practice and he reduced my odds accordingly. We kept a record of our score, and, like any other boy, he went to bed happier if the tally-sheet showed a balance in his favor. He was willing to be beaten, but not too often.

It was natural that an intimacy of association and

personal interest should grow under such conditions, and I was boundlessly grateful to Mrs. Rogers for her gift, which, whatever it meant to him, meant so much more to me. Our disparity of ages and attainments no longer existed. The pleasant land of play is a democracy where such things do not count.

He was not an even-tempered player. When the balls were perverse in their movements and his aim unsteady he was likely to be short with his opponent, even faultfinding. Then presently he would be seized with remorse and become over-gentle, even attentive, placing the balls as I knocked them into the pockets, hurrying the length of the table to render this service.

One day he found it impossible to make any of his favorite shots. He grew more and more restive—the lightning became vividly picturesque as the clouds blackened. Finally, with a regular thunder-blast, he seized the cue with both hands and literally mowed the balls from the table, landing at least two of them on the floor. I do not recall his remarks—I was chiefly concerned in getting out of the way. I gathered up the balls and we went on playing as if nothing had happened, only he was very gentle and sweet, like the sun on the meadows after the storm has passed by. Presently he said:

“This is a most amusing game. When you play badly it amuses me, and when I play badly and lose my temper it certainly must amuse you.”

He was always inventing new games, and new rules for them, and it especially amused him to invent a rule in the middle of the shot that would advantage

himself or work damage to his opponent. If objection was made to this he would argue the matter with apparent seriousness, and then pretend to make a great sacrifice by yielding.

Other billiardists dropped in from time to time. Any number of his friends were willing, even eager, to come for his entertainment. But the list of them who could afford to devote a number of hours each day to billiards dwindled down to a single individual. Even I could not have done it, could not have afforded it, had it not been contributory to my work. To me the association was invaluable; it drew from him a thousand long-forgotten incidents; it invited a stream of picturesque comments and philosophies; it furnished the most intimate insight into his character.

We celebrated his seventy-first birthday by playing billiards all day. He invented a new game for the occasion, and new rules for it with almost every shot. It happened that no members of his household were home on his birthday. Ill health had banished everyone, even his secretary. Flowers, telegrams, and congratulations came, and a string of callers. We were entirely alone at dinner, and I felt the great honor of being his only guest on such an occasion. A year earlier the flower of his profession had assembled to pay him tribute.

Once between the courses, when he rose as usual to walk about, he wandered into the drawing room and, seating himself at the orchestrelle, began to play the beautiful flower song from "Faust." It

was a thing I had not seen him do before and I never saw him do it again. Returning to the table, he said:

"Speaking of companions of the long ago, after fifty years they become only shadows and might as well be in the grave. Only those whom one has really loved mean anything at all. Of my playmates, I recall John Briggs, John Garth, and Laura Hawkins—just those three. The rest I buried long ago, and memory cannot even find their graves."

He was in his loveliest humor all that day and evening; and that night when he stopped playing he said, "I have never had a pleasanter day at this game."

I answered, "I hope ten years from to-night we shall still be playing it."

"Yes," he said, "still playing the best game on earth."

For a full ten days we were alone in the big house with the servants. We hurried through the mail in the morning; then, while I answered such letters as required attention, he dictated for an hour or so on the autobiography; after which, billiards for the day and evening.

In December, we made a trip to Washington, in the interest of the new copyright bill. It was a highly interesting experience, but can only be briefly touched upon here. Speaker Cannon ("Uncle Joe") gave us his private room in the Capitol as lobbying headquarters—probably the only instance of the sort on record—and there, all one afternoon, in an air blue with cigar smoke, Mark Twain, dressed in

creamy white, received a stream of Congressmen, and preached to them the gospel of copyright.

I might have mentioned earlier that Mark Twain was now wearing white, regardless of the weather and season. On our return from Dublin he had said:

"I can't bear to put on black clothes again. I wish I could wear white all winter. . . . When I put on black it reminds me of my funerals," and it was not long after that he said, "I have made up my mind not to wear black any more, but white, and let the critics say what they will."

Of course the newspaper reporters and artists had exploited the "white flannel suit," and in Washington our apartment at the New Willard was besieged by interviewers who were apparently quite as much interested in Mark Twain's wardrobe as in copyright.

From the Washington trip dates a period of still closer association with Mark Twain. On our way home he suggested that I take up residence in his house. There was room going to waste, he said, and it would be handier for the early and late billiard sessions. After that most of the days and far into the night we were together.

Looking back at that time now, I see pretty vividly three quite distinct pictures. One of them the rich, red interior of the billiard room, with the brilliant green square in the center, on which the gay balls are rolling, and bending over it a white, luminous figure in the instant of play.

Then there is the long, lighted drawing room, with the same figure stretched on a couch in the corner,

drowsily smoking, while the rich organ tones fill the place, summoning for him scenes and faces which the others do not see. Sometimes he rose, walking the length of the parlors, his step timed to the music and his thought. Of medium height, he gave the impression of being tall—his head thrown up and, like a lion's, rather large for his body. But oftener he lay among the cushions, the light flooding his white hair and dress and heightening his brilliant coloring.

The third picture is that of the dinner table—always beautifully laid and always a fount of wisdom, when he was there. He did not always talk, but it was his habit to do so, and I see him clearest now, his face alive with interest, presenting some new angle of thought in his inimitable speech. These are the pictures that have remained to me, and they do not fade away.

How I wish the marvelous things he said would remain as clear! They came unpremeditated and possessed a quality which no art could reproduce. I preserved some of them as best I could, and in time trained myself to recall portions of his exact phrasing.

The dinner-table talk naturally varied in character from that of the billiard room. The latter was likely to be more anecdotal and personal. The former often ranged through a variety of subjects—scientific, political, and religious. Often it was of infinity—the forces of creation—satire of the orthodox conceptions, heresies of his own devising. Once he said:

“No one who thinks can imagine the universe made by chance. It is too nicely assembled and

regulated. There is, of course, a great Master Mind, but it cares nothing for our happiness or our unhappiness. . . . The human conception is that God is sitting up nights, worrying over the individuals of this infinitesimal race."

But we cannot follow Mark Twain's talk here. Much of it has been set down elsewhere.¹

Of his billiard-room talk also we can preserve but little. He did not talk or wish to be talked to when the game was actually in progress. If there was anything to be said on either side he would stop and rest his cue on the floor, or sit down on the couch until the matter was concluded. At one such time he told me of his three recurrent dreams; one of which was that because of reduced circumstances he had returned to piloting and found himself always on the brink of some night disaster. Another was that he had returned to lecturing and could not hold his audience, but in the semi-darkness was talking to an empty house. The third was that dream common to most of us, of being in the midst of company, scantily clad.

"People don't seem to notice me there, at first; then pretty soon somebody points me out, and they all begin to look at me suspiciously and I can see they are wondering who I am and why I am there in that costume. Then it occurs to me that I can fix it by making myself known. I take hold of some man and whisper to him, 'I am Mark Twain,' but that does not improve it, for immediately I can hear

¹In *Mark Twain—A Biography*.

him whispering to the others, 'He says he is Mark Twain,' and they look at me a good deal more suspiciously than before; and I can see they don't believe it and that it was a mistake to make that confession."

Now and again some curious episode of the world's history would flash upon him—something amusing or coarse or tragic—and he would bring the game to a standstill and recount it with wonderful accuracy as to date and circumstances. He had a natural passion for historic events, and a gift for mentally fixing them. But his memory in other ways was seldom reliable.

Spring came, and I made a journey—a pilgrimage to the Mississippi and the Pacific coast, to see those few still remaining who had known Mark Twain in his youth. It was undertaken none too soon. John Briggs, a gentle-hearted man, talked with me by his fire during a memorable afternoon, and reviewed the pranks of those days along the river, and in the cave, and on Holliday's Hill. I think it was six weeks later that he died, while others of that scattering procession did not reach the end of the year. Joe Goodman, still in full vigor, journeyed with me to the green and dreamy solitudes of Jackass Hill. Jim Gillis, down in Sonora, was too ill to see me, but his brother Steve, Mark Twain's boon companion, occupied a cabin on the old spot where Jim and Dick Stoker had led their simple, idyllic existence fifty years before. Steve Gillis was an invalid, but the

fire was still in his eyes and speech as he sat up on his couch and told old tales and adventures. When I left he said:

"Tell Sam I'm going to die pretty soon, but that I love him; that I've loved him all my life and I'll love him till I die. This is the last word I'll ever send him."

I returned by way of New Orleans and the Mississippi River, for I wished to follow that abandoned water highway and to visit its presiding genius, Horace Bixby, then still alive and in service as pilot of the government's snag boat, with headquarters at St. Louis.¹

Coming up the river on one of the old passenger steamboats, I noticed in a paper that came aboard that Mark Twain was to receive from Oxford University the literary doctor's degree. The little bare-foot lad who had played along the river banks at Hannibal—whose highest ambition had been to become a river pilot—was about to be crowned by the world's foremost institution of learning.

He sailed on the 8th of June, 1907, exactly forty years from the day he had sailed on the *Quaker City* to win his greater fame. He was absent six weeks—a period of continuous triumph. England never gave a more splendid welcome to any private citizen; the demonstration of affection and honor, which began with the moment of his arrival, did not cease while he was on British soil. His former London

¹He died August 2, 1912, at the age of eighty-six.

visits had been distinguished by high attentions, but all of them combined could not equal what happened now. He was entertained by clubs and by the highest officials of Church and State. A dinner was given him by the staff of London *Punch* in the historic editorial rooms where no foreigner had ever sat before. He was received with special favor at the King's garden party; he traveled by a royal train; crowds gathered everywhere to see him pass. At Oxford, when he showed himself on the street, the name Mark Twain ran up and down like a cry of fire and the people came running. When he appeared on the stage of the Sheldonian Theater to receive his degree, clad in his doctor's robe of scarlet and gray, there developed suddenly what the English papers referred to as a "cyclone"—the shouting of the undergraduates for the boy who had been Tom Sawyer and played with Huckleberry Finn.

He came home, and I was summoned to "come down and play billiards." His ship had arrived somewhat earlier than it had been expected, so I had not been on hand to greet him.

I confess I went with a certain degree of awe, overwhelmed, as it were, with the echoes of his great triumph—prepared to sit a good way off in silence and listen to the tale of the returning hero. But when I arrived he was already in the billiard room, knocking the balls about—his coat off, for it was a hot night. As I stepped in the door he said:

"Get your cue. I've been inventing a new game."

That was all. The pageant was over; the curtain

was rung down; business was resumed a stand.

There followed another winter, during there was much billiards. Sometimes we almost the night through, but never did I know him to show any sign of weariness, though he was seventy-two years old now, an age at which most men find their muscles less elastic and enduring. Ready to drop in my tracks, I sometimes begged for respite, whereupon he would taunt me with my youth and add, "You don't sleep enough," a statement with which I was willing to agree, and I sometimes made an excuse to slip away for a day or two to repair that need.

The literary event of that winter was the publication in *Harper's Magazine* of a story which Mark Twain had written some forty years before—a burlesque on the orthodox idea of the hereafter, entitled "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven." Of his unpublished manuscripts it had always been his favorite, and he had often been tempted to print it, restrained partly by Mrs. Clemens's disapproval, partly by his own wish not to wound a vast number of well-meaning, even if misguided, persons. But times had changed now. It was no longer regarded as blasphemous to speak lightly of hell, or even to suggest that the golden streets and jeweled architecture of the sky might be regarded as symbols of hope rather than exhibits of actual bullion and lapidary construction.

Mark Twain often allowed his fancy to play with

the idea of the orthodox heaven, its curiosities of architecture, its employments of continuous prayer, psalm singing, and harpistry.

"What a childish notion it was," he said, "and how curious that only a little while ago human beings were so willing to accept such fragile evidences about a place of so much importance. . . . As to the hereafter, we have not the slightest evidence that there is any—*no* evidence that appeals to logic or reason. I have never seen what to me seemed an atom of proof that there is a future life." Then after a long pause he added, "And yet—I am strongly inclined to expect one."

XXXVII

THE NEW HOME—A WARNING

THE new home at Redding, on which work had been going forward for something more than a year, was finished and ready for occupancy in June. Mark Twain had never seen it, not even the land I had bought for him, and had given only the most casual attention to the plans and schemes for furnishing. He had specified only that the billiard room be red—mainly for the reason, I think, that his former billiard room had been red, an association not lightly to be disregarded. Another requirement was that the place should be complete. "I don't want to see it," he said, "until the cat is purring on the hearth."

It was the 18th of June, 1908, that Mark Twain took possession of his new home. The Fifth Avenue house was not dismantled, for he had expected to use the Redding place for summer only. The servants, however, with one exception, had been transferred the week before, and Clemens and I had remained alone, though not lonely, in the city house, playing billiards most of the time. He seldom mentioned the impending change, and I think gave the matter little thought. He had never seen even a

photograph of the place, and I confess I had moments of anxiety.

The morning of the 18th was bright and sunny and cool. Mark Twain was up and shaved by six o'clock in order to be in time, though the train did not leave until four in the afternoon. We were deep in billiards when word was brought up that the cab was waiting. He wore his creamy flannels and a Panama hat, and at the station a group quickly collected, reporters and others, to speed him to his new home.

The quick travel, the gay, flying landscape, with glimpses of the Sound and white sails, the hillsides and clear streams becoming rapidly steeper and clearer as we turned northward, all seemed to gratify him. As the train slowed down for the Redding station, and the train porters came for the bags, he drew from his pocket a handful of silver.

"Give them something," he said; "give everybody liberally that does any service."

There was a sort of open-air reception in waiting. An assemblage of vehicles (horse-drawn vehicles in that day), all festooned with flowers, had gathered to offer gallant country welcome.

It was now a little before six o'clock of that long June day—still and dreamlike—and there was something which was not quite reality in the scene. The people did not cheer; they smiled and waved to the white figure, and he smiled and waved a reply. It was like a scene in a cinema.

His carriage led away on the three-mile drive to the house on the hilltop; the floral procession fell in

behind. Hillsides were green, fields were white with daisies, laurel shone among the trees. He was very quiet as we drove along. Once with gentle humor, looking out over a white daisy field, he said:

"That is buckwheat. I always recognize buckwheat when I see it. I wish I knew as much about other things as I know about buckwheat. It seems to be very plentiful here; it even grows by the roadside."

The water was flowing over the milldam where the road crossed Saugatuck, and a little farther along a brook cascaded down the hillside.

The last of the procession had dropped away and he was alone with those who had most anxiety for his verdict. The carriage ascended still higher, the view opened across the Saugatuck Valley, with its cozy church spire, its farmhouses, its distant blue hills. Then came the house—an Italian villa such as he had known in Florence, adapted here to American climate and needs. Around it waved green grass, and there were beds of blooming flowers. At the entrance his domestic staff waited to greet him; then presently he stepped across the threshold and stood in his own home for the first time in seventeen years. Nothing was lacking—all was as completely furnished as if he had occupied it for a lifetime.

It was an anxious moment and no one spoke immediately. But when his eyes had taken in the harmony of the place, he said, very gently:

"How beautiful it all is! I did not think it could be as beautiful as this."

And later, when he had seen all the rooms, including

the splendid, glowing billiard room, saved for the last, he said:

"It is a perfect house—perfect, so far as I can see, in every detail. It might have been here always."

To see him bending over the billiard table five minutes later, one could easily fancy that Mark Twain, as well as the house, had been there always.

There were guests that first evening—a small home dinner party—and one not knowing would hardly have imagined it to be the first dinner served in that lovely room. A little later, at the foot of the garden, neighbors set off some fireworks. Mark Twain stepped out on the terrace, where rockets were climbing through the sky to announce his arrival.

"I wonder why they all go to so much trouble for me," he said, softly. "I never go to any trouble for anybody."

The evening closed with billiards—boisterous, triumphant billiards—and when at midnight the cues were set in the rack none could say that Mark Twain's first day in his new home had not been a happy one.

We had feared that he might grow lonely, but he promptly provided company for himself in the person of Colonel Harvey's little daughter, Dorothy, and my own daughter, Louise. They were about fourteen, and if there was any loneliness about the place it was not discoverable. Games of billiards were in constant progress—all idea of work was forgotten. He had named the place "Innocence at Home," but somewhat later the name of "Stormfield" was

adopted—for two reasons: The money received from "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven" had been used to add a loggia, and then the summer storms that gathered on that rockbound, open hill—wild, fierce storms that bent the birch and cedar and strained at the bay and huckleberry—made the name "Stormfield" peculiarly appropriate. He loved the place, and in his new contentment very soon decided to make the place his permanent home.

I was not living at "Stormfield" at this period, but my house was only a short distance away and I went up daily for billiards. Sometimes when there were no guests we took long walks over the fields, frequently resting in some shady place. Generally at these times he talked—the subject growing out of any object or suggestion of the moment. "The Great Law" was a phrase often on his lips. The exquisite foliage, the cloud shapes, the perfect formation of some tiny flower, the varieties of color everywhere—these were for him outward manifestations of "The Great Law" whose principle I understood to be unity—interrelation throughout all nature.

Mark Twain interested himself in the affairs and people of Redding. Soon after his arrival he gathered all the inhabitants of the countryside, neighbors of every quality, and threw open to them every part of the new house. It was a sort of gala day, and the rooms and the grounds were filled with visitors.

It was not very long after this that he conceived the idea of establishing a community library. He

had a great quantity of surplus books, and there was a small, unused church in West Redding, suitable for library purposes. The matter was not delayed. Shelving was erected, the books put in place, and the library duly opened. In the speech which he made on that occasion he said:

"I am glad to help this library. We get our morals from books. I didn't get mine from books, but I know that morals do come from books—theoretically, at least. . . . I am going to help build that library [a proposed new building] with contributions—from my visitors. Every male guest who comes to my house will have to contribute a dollar or go away without his baggage."

Winter came. The walks were fewer and there was a good deal of company. The house was gay and the billiard games protracted. In February, I made a trip to Europe and the Mediterranean, to follow in part the footsteps of *The Innocents Abroad*. Returning in April, I found him somewhat changed. It was not that he had grown older or less full of life, but only less active, less eager for gay company, and he no longer dictated, or very rarely. His daughter Jean, who had been in a health resort, was coming home to act as his secretary, which made him very happy.

It was about this time that Mark Twain's loyal friend, Henry H. Rogers, suddenly died. It was a heavy blow to him, and may have had something to do with the almost immediate development of the

malady which a year later would bring his own life to its close.

The first symptom of this trouble manifested itself during a trip which we made to Baltimore in June. Clemens had gone there for the purpose of making an address at the Commencement exercises of a girls' school. He was gay on the train, but at the hotel he complained of weariness and lay down for a little, to read. By and by he got up and began walking slowly to and fro. He stopped, facing me, and placed his hand upon his breast, saying:

"I think I must have caught a little cold yesterday on that Fifth Avenue stage. I have a curious pain in my breast."

He was fond of riding on the top of the stages, and the day before had been chilly. I thought it not unlikely that he had taken cold, and suggested that he lie down again. The pain passed away, and by and by he got up and walked about, talking amusingly. He paused all at once, and again laying his hand on his breast, said:

"That pain has come back. It is a curious, sickening, deadly kind of pain. I never had anything just like it."

It seemed to me that his face had become rather gray. I said, "Where is it exactly, Mr. Clemens?"

He placed his hand in the center of his breast and said, "It is here, and it is very peculiar indeed."

Remotely in my mind occurred the thought that he had located his heart, and the "peculiar, deadly

pain" he had mentioned seemed ominous. A hot-water bag relieved it and this time it had apparently gone to stay, for it did not return while we were in Baltimore.

I was with him almost constantly during the rest of that year. At first I went up only for the day, but later, when his health did not improve, when "the breast pains" returned and he expressed a wish for companionship evenings, I remained most of the nights, as well. Dr. Edward Quintard came up from New York, and counseled diminished smoking, with less active exercise, advising particularly against the life-time habit of lightly skipping up and down stairs. There was no prohibition as to billiards or leisurely walking, and we played pretty steadily through those peaceful days or went down into the meadows, though he leaned on me a good deal, something which he had not done before. On one of these walks I pointed out a little corner of land which earlier he had given me to straighten out our division line. I told him I was going to build a study on it and call it "Markland." He said:

"If you had a place for that extra billiard table of mine [the Rogers table], I would turn it over to you."

I replied that I could adapt the size of my proposed study to fit a billiard table, and he said:

"Now that will be very good. Then when I want exercise I can walk down and play billiards with you, and when you want exercise you can walk up and play with me. You must build that study."

The pain came with increasing frequency and

severity. It must have been a cruel pain, but he never complained, and at billiards he would go on playing in his turn. We had found that a glass of very hot water relieved it and we kept a thermos bottle or two filled and ready. Sometimes the relief came quickly, but there were times when that deadly gripping did not soon release him.

We were alone together most of the time. Our rooms were only separated by a bathroom, and as neither of us was much given to sleep, there was likely to be talk or reading aloud at almost any hour when both were awake. So it came about that there could hardly have been closer companionship than was ours during this the last year of Mark Twain's life. For me, of course, nothing can ever be like it again in this world. One is not likely to associate twice with a being from another star.

XXXVIII

THE DEATH OF JEAN

THE wedding of Clara Clemens to Ossip Gabrilowitsch, the Russian pianist, occurred in October, and the young people presently sailed for Europe, which was to be their home. This marriage made Mark Twain very happy. He had known and admired Gabrilowitsch since the days in Vienna, ten years before.

Jean Clemens was now the head of the house, and, what with her secretarial work and her uncertain health, the burden was too heavy. She had a passion for animal life of every kind, and at one corner of the estate had set up quite an establishment of chickens and domestic animals. This with her other responsibilities gave her little time for rest. Her condition did not seem critical, but the thought of her future was a matter of deep anxiety to her father.

November came, and the dull, chilly days had a tendency to aggravate Clemens's malady. The breast pains became very severe. The warm air of Bermuda was prescribed for him, and on the 19th we sailed for a month's holiday. Most of his visit was spent at the home of the vice-consul, Mr. William H. Allen, Bayhouse, a beautiful place on the water's edge. It was a quiet, congenial environment. Little

Helen Allen proved a charming playmate and there were drives each afternoon. His health improved in that balmy air and the pains troubled him but little.

His seventy-fourth birthday (November 30, 1909) found him looking wonderfully well, his face full of color and freshness, his eyes bright, keen, and full of good humor. It was rather gloomy outside, so we remained indoors, playing games, reading, and talking. Once in the midst of something he forgot a word and denounced his poor memory.

"I'll forget the Lord's middle name, sometime," he declared, "right in the midst of a storm when I need all the help I can get."

Later he said, "Nobody dreamed, seventy-four years ago to-day, that I would be in Bermuda now." And I thought he meant a good deal more than the words conveyed.

We sailed for America on the 18th of December. Jean was at the wharf to meet us, blue and shivering with the cold. It was wretchedly bleak there, and I had the feeling that she should not have come. Some days later I found her full of interest in her Christmas preparations. She had a handsome tree set up in the loggia, with packages piled around it. She had forgotten nobody, and I could see that, with her many duties, she was under a considerable strain. I suggested that for a time at least I might assume a part of her burden. I was to remain at my own home that night, and as I left "Stormfield" I passed Jean on the stair. She said cheerfully that she felt a little tired and was going to lie down.

I was at breakfast next morning (this was December 24) when word was brought in that one of the men from "Stormfield" was outside and wished to see me. When I went out he said:

"Miss Jean is dead. They have just found her in the bathroom. Mr. Clemens sent me to bring you."

In her debilitated condition the shock of a cold bath had been too much for her. Her heart had stopped beating. I learned this as we drove up the hill. When I entered Clemens's room he looked at me helplessly and said:

"Well, I suppose you have heard of this final disaster."

He was not violent or broken down with grief. For many years Jean had been subject to that incurable malady, epilepsy, and even in the first moment of his loss he realized that there was no longer the dreaded prospect of leaving her behind. He had me cable the Gabrilowitsches in Europe the facts, and tell them not to come. A little later he asked me if we would close our house for the winter and occupy "Stormfield." He would go back to Bermuda, he said, but he wished the house kept open, so it would be ready for him at any time. Young Jervis Langdon was summoned from Elmira, to take Jean there, where she would lie with the others.

Clemens remained for the most part in his room. Once when I went in he said:

"I have been looking in at Jean, and envying her. I have never greatly envied anyone but the dead. I always envy the dead."

He went in to look at her Christmas tree "drenched," as he said, with tinsel and piled all about with gifts, and to her room where other heaps of gifts lay on the chairs and on her desk. Among them, for himself, was a handsome globe. During the afternoon I found him writing:

"I am setting it down," he said, "everything; it is a relief to me to write it. It furnishes me an excuse for thinking."

He continued writing most of the day, and at intervals during the next day and the next.

At six o'clock in the evening of Christmas Day they set out with Jean on her last journey. Clemens, who was unable to travel to Elmira and did not have the strength to be near Jean at the parting, asked me to play on the orchestrelle her favorite music, when the moment came to take the coffin away. He said:

"When I hear the music I shall know they are starting. Tell them to set lanterns at the door, so I can look down and see them go."

So I sat at the organ and began playing as they lifted and bore her away. A soft, heavy snow was falling and the gloom of those shortest days was closing in. There was not the least wind or noise. The whole world was muffled. The lanterns sent their glow into the thickly falling flakes. The little group at the door saw him come to the window above, the light on his white hair as he stood gazing down, watching Jean going away from him for the last time.

I played steadily on, as he had instructed. When I had finished I went up and found him.

"Poor little Jean!" he said, "but for her it is so good to go."

In his own story of it he wrote:

From my windows I saw the hearse and the carriages wind along the road and gradually grow vague and spectral in the falling snow, and presently disappear. Jean was gone out of my life, and would not come back any more.

Next day the storm had turned into a fearful blizzard. The whole hilltop was a raging, driving mass of white. Once during the afternoon he said:

"Jean always so loved to see a storm like this, and just now at Elmira they are burying her."

And in the story:

It is the time appointed. The funeral has begun. . . . Jean's coffin stands where her mother and I stood, forty years ago, and were married; and where Susy's coffin stood thirteen years ago; where her mother's stood five and a half years ago; and where mine shall stand, after a little time.

It was that evening that he came into the room where Mrs. Paine and I sat by the fire, bringing his manuscript.

"I have finished my story of Jean's death," he said. "It is the end of my autobiography. I shall never write any more. I can't judge myself at all. One of you read it aloud to the other and let me know what you think of it."

"The Death of Jean" is one of the rarest pieces of elegiac writing in the language, and it was thoroughly in keeping with his entire career that he should thus, in this unique and dramatic manner, bring it to a close.

XXXIX

THE RETURN TO BERMUDA, AND HOME

SOMETHING more than a week later Mark Twain returned to his good friends, the Allens, in Bermuda, and remained with them during the rest of that winter. The eve of sailing he spent in the home of relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Loomis. William Dean Howells came in and the talk was of many things. It was the last evening the two friends would ever spend together.

The warm airs of Bermuda were, as always, kindly to Mark Twain, and for a time he seemed to improve. Once he wrote:

Life continues here the same as usual. There isn't a fault in it—good times, good home, tranquil contentment all day and every day without a break.

This was near the end of January, and most of his reports continued in the same spirit, always full of humor, often of plans for days ahead. But near the end of March he spoke of coming home. He had engaged passage, he said, for April 23d:

But don't tell anybody. I don't want it known. I may have to go sooner if the pain in my breast does not mend its ways pretty considerable. I don't want to die here, for this is an unkind place for a person in that condition. . . . I am growing more and more particular about the place.

Three days later he wrote that he was having a most uncomfortable time with the breast pains, and the same mail brought me a letter from Mr. Allen who frankly stated that his condition had become very serious indeed. This was on April 1st. On the same day I went to New York, and consulted with Doctor Quintard, who joined me in a cablegram to the Gabrilowitsches, advising them to sail without delay.

I sent no word to Bermuda that I was coming, and no one at Bay House was expecting me. The doors were all open and I entered without knocking, passing through to the room occupied by Mark Twain. He was sitting alone, in a large chair, clad in the familiar dressing gown. Certainly he was much thinner. When he turned and saw me he seemed a little dazed.

"Why," he said, holding out his hand, "you did not tell us that you were coming!"

"No," I answered, "it *is* rather sudden. I didn't quite like the sound of your last letters."

"But those were not serious," he protested. "You shouldn't have come on *my* account."

I said, then, that I had come on my own account: that I had felt the need of recreation.

"That's—very—good," he said, in his slow, gentle fashion. "*Now* I'm glad to see you."

His breakfast came in and he ate with appetite. When he had been shaved and freshly propped in his pillows it seemed to me that I must have been mistaken in thinking him so changed. His color was fine, his eyes were bright, he seemed only thinner.

He spoke of the fierce pains he had gone through and how he had been given hypodermic injections, which he amusingly termed "hypnotic injunctions" and "subcutaneous applications," having his humor out of it, as of course he must have even though death should stand there in person.

We drove out that afternoon and he discussed the old subjects in the old way. He spoke, too, of the Redding Library. I had sold for him the farm where Jean had kept her animals, and he wished to use the money received for it to erect some sort of memorial to Jean. I suggested the new library building, and he asked me to write his lawyer, Mr. Lark, and have a paper prepared, naming trustees for the fund.

The pains did not trouble him again for several days, but he remained quietly at the house and did not drive out again. For the most part he sat in bed, reading or smoking as in the old days, apparently full of vigor and the joy of life.

He had really written nothing in Bermuda, doing only a little playful scribbling—some valentines for Helen, and some amusing paragraphs of "last advice"—for me, as he confessed—what I was to do on reaching the gate of which St. Peter is said to keep the key. As it is the last writing he ever did, and because it is characteristic, a few paragraphs are here included:

Upon arrival do not speak to St. Peter until spoken to. It is not your place to begin.

Do not begin any remark with "say."

You can ask him for his autograph—there is no harm in that—

but be careful and don't remark that it is one of the penalties of greatness. He has heard *that* before.

Leave your dog outside. Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit you would stay out and the dog would go in.

I spent most of each day with him, merely sitting by the bed and reading, while he himself read or dozed. I could see that he did not improve; yet each evening would find him gay, and it pleased him to have the entire family gather around, while he became really hilarious over the happenings of the day.

There came a hard night. The doctor was summoned and repeated injections of morphine were required to ease the pain. In the early morning, I found him sitting in his chair, trying to sing, after his old morning habit. He took my hand and said:

"Well, I had a picturesque night; every pain I had was on exhibition." He quoted a line of poetry and commented on it; then he said: "I must watch for the *Bermudian* and see if she salutes. The captain knows I am here, sick, and he blows two short whistles just as they come up behind that little island. Those are for me."

The *Bermudian* was the New York boat, and her arrival was always on schedule time. She came down the bay presently, her bright red stacks towering vividly above a green island. Suddenly there were two white puffs of steam, and two short, deep notes went up from her.

"Those are for me," he said. "Captain Fraser does not forget me."

Mr. Allen engaged our passage for the 12th. On the

11th, our patient thought if he could get back to the high altitude of "Stormfield" he might easily survive the summer. That night he was unusually merry. After we left him he felt wakeful and slipped out on the veranda, where we found him marching up and down as unconcerned as if he were not an invalid at all.

As long as I remember anything, I shall remember the forty-eight hours of our homeward voyage. At first he seemed comfortable, and asked for a catalogue of the ship's library. But then we ran into the more oppressive air of the Gulf Stream and his breathing, at first difficult, soon became next to impossible. It was only a step to the deck, and no passengers were there. I had Claude, his valet, bring a steamer chair, and we supported him into it and bundled him with rugs. But his breathing there was worse, if anything, than before. It seemed to me that the end might come at any moment, and this thought was in his own mind, for once, in the struggle for air, he managed to say:

"I am going. I shall be gone in a moment."

Breath came, but we realized that even his cabin was better than this. I steadied him back to his berth and shut out most of that deadly dampness. He asked for the "hypnotic injunction," for his humor never left him, and though it was not yet the hour prescribed, I could not deny it. It was impossible for him to lie down, even to recline, without great distress. The opiate made him drowsy, but the devil of suffocation was always lying in wait to bring him back for fresh tortures. When he could no longer

stay in his berth, I steadied him on his feet or in a sitting posture on the couch opposite the berth.

In spite of his suffering, two dominant characteristics remained—his sense of humor and tender consideration for another. Once when the ship rolled and his hat fell from the hook and made the circuit of the cabin floor, he said:

"The ship is passing the hat." And again: "I am sorry for you, Paine, but I can't help it. I can't hurry this dying business. Can't you give me enough of the hypnotic injunctions to put an end to me?"

As I looked at him there, so reduced in his estate, I could not but remember all the labor of his years and all the splendid honor which the world had paid him. Something of this may have entered his mind, too. For once when I offered him some of the milder remedies which we had brought he said:

"After forty years of public effort I have become just a target for medicines." And a little later, "Oh, it is such a mystery, and it takes so long!"

It has been written—I do not know with what proof—that certain great dissenters have recanted with the approach of death—have become weak and afraid to ignore old traditions in the face of that great mystery. I wish to write here that Mark Twain, as he neared the end, showed never a single tremor of fear or even of reluctance. If I have dwelt somewhat upon these moments when suffering was upon him and death the imminent shadow, it is to show that at the end he was as he had always been, neither more nor less, and never less than brave.

Somehow those two days and nights went by. Once, when he was partially relieved by the opiate, I slept while Claude watched, and again in the fading end of the last night, when we had passed at length into the cool, bracing northern air and breath had come back to him, and with it sleep.

Relatives, physicians, and news gatherers were at the dock to welcome him. An invalid carriage had been provided, and a compartment secured on the afternoon train to Redding—the same train that had taken us there two years before. He apparently suffered not at all during the journey, and on that still, sweet April evening we drove to “Stormfield,” much as we had driven there the first time. As we turned into the lane that led up the hill he said:

“Can we see where you have built your billiard room?”

The gables showed above the trees and I pointed it out to him.

“It looks quite imposing,” he said.

I think it was the last outside interest he ever showed in anything.

Arriving at “Stormfield,” he stepped unassisted from the carriage, to greet the members of the household, assembled to welcome him, and with all his old courtliness offered each his hand. Then, in the canvas chair we had brought, we carried him upstairs to his room—the big beautiful room that looked out to the sunset hills. This was Thursday evening, April 14, 1910.

XL

THE ENVIED ESTATE

MARK TWAIN lived just a week from that day and hour. For a time he seemed full of life, talking freely and suffering little. Clara and Ossip Gabrilowitsch arrived on Saturday, and found him cheerful, quite like himself. The physicians denied him the morphine, now, and once when I went in he said, rather mournfully:

"They won't give me the subcutaneous any more."

At intervals he read. Two old favorites, the *Twelve Cæsars of Suetonius* and Carlyle's *French Revolution*, lay on the bed beside him, and he would pick them up and read a page or a paragraph. Sometimes when I saw him thus, the high color still in his face, the clear light in his eyes, I said, "It is not reality; he is not going to die."

The news of his condition, everywhere published, brought great heaps of letters, and a few of these messages were reported to him. He talked at intervals, much in the old way, commenting sometimes on the aspects of his malady. But we saw that he was failing. On the Wednesday following our arrival his mind wandered.

A year earlier, during one of his talks on astronomy, a subject which he loved, he had said to me:

"I came in with Halley's comet in 1835. It is coming again next year and I expect to go out with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's comet."

He was not to be disappointed. We did not know it then, but on Wednesday night the mysterious messenger of his birth year became visible in the sky.

His mind was fairly clear next morning and he sent word by Clara that he wished to see me. When I came he spoke of two unfinished manuscripts which he wished me to "throw away," as he briefly expressed it, for his words were few now and uncertain. I assured him that I would attend to the matter and he pressed my hand. It was his last word to me. The nurses told me that he had tried to read a little, from the *Suetonius* or from one of the volumes of Carlyle.

Somewhat after midday, when Clara was by him, he roused up and took her hand, and seemed to speak with less effort.

"Good-by," he said. And Doctor Quintard, who was standing near, thought he added, "If we meet," but the words were very faint.

He looked at her for a little while, then sank into a doze, and from it passed into a deeper slumber, and did not heed us any more.

Through that peaceful spring afternoon the life wave ebbed lower and lower. It was about half-past six and the sun just lay on the horizon when his

breathing, which had gradually become more subdued, broke a little. There was no suggestion of any struggle. The noble head turned a little to one side—the breath that had been unceasing through seventy-four tumultuous years had stopped forever.

He had entered into the estate envied so long. In his own words—the words of one of his latest memoranda—he had “arrived at the dignity of death—the only earthly dignity that is not artificial—the only safe one. The others are traps that can beguile to humiliation.

“Death—the only immortal who treats us all alike, whose pity and whose peace and whose refuge are for all—the soiled and the pure—the rich and the poor—the loved and the unloved.”

In the Brick Church of New York, Mark Twain, dressed in the white he loved so well, lay with the nobility of death upon him, while a multitude of those who loved him passed by and looked at his face for the last time. Flowers in profusion were banked about him, but on the casket lay a single wreath which Dan Beard and his wife had woven from the laurel which grows on “Stormfield” hill. He was never more beautiful than as he lay there, and it was an impressive scene to see those thousands file by, regard him for a moment gravely, thoughtfully, and pass on. All sorts were there—rich and poor; some crossed themselves, some saluted, some paused a little to take a closer look, but no one offered even to pick a flower.

Howells came, and in his book he says:

I looked a moment at the face I knew so well; and it was patient with the patience I had so often seen in it: something of a puzzle, a great silent dignity, an assent to what must be from the depths of a nature whose tragical seriousness broke in the laughter which the unwise took for the whole of him.

THE END

INDEX

INDEX

A

- A. T. Lacy, the boat in which Mark Twain overtook the destroyer of the *Pennsylvania*, 16.
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, the, see *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of*.
Adventures of Tom Sawyer, the, see *Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of*.
 "Ah Sm," the unsuccessful play by Mark Twain and Bret Harte, 146.
 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, Mark Twain associates with, in Boston, 127; Mark Twain's happy days with, in Hartford, 137; considers lecture tour with Mark Twain, Howells, and Cable, 171.
 "All Sorts and Conditions of Ships," Mark Twain writes on ship-board, 196.
 Allen, Helen, daughter of William H. Allen, vice-consul at Bermuda, a companion to Mark Twain during his visit to Bermuda, 280, 281.
 Allen, William H., vice-consul at Bermuda, host to Mark Twain, 280, 281; again entertains Mark Twain in Bermuda, 285-288; reports Mark Twain's serious condition to Paine, 286.
Alta California, the, Col. John McComb, editor of, encourages Mark Twain to lecture, 96; sends Mark Twain on the *Quaker City* Holy Land Excursion (q. v.), 100, 101; proposes to publish *The Innocents Abroad*, but gives in, 111.
 Ament, Mark Twain's boss in his first job, 24, 25.
 Angel's Camp, in Calaveras County in Bret Harte's stories, Mark Twain at, 88.
 "Answers to Correspondents," contributed by Mark Twain to the *Californian*, and later included in *Sketches New and Old*, 80.
 Artemus Ward (Charles F. Browne), meets Mark Twain in Virginia City, 1863, 78; adventure with Mark Twain in Virginia City, 78-80; advises Mark Twain to contribute to the *New York Sunday Mercury*, 80; with Mark Twain in San Francisco, 85; gets Mark Twain to write jumping

- frog story, 91; Mark Twain prepares a lecture on, 126.
 "At the Back of the North Wind," Mark Twain recalls Susy Clemens's liking for, 219, 220.
Atlantic Monthly, the, Mark Twain meets William Dean Howells (q. v.) assistant editor of, 119; prints Mark Twain's "A True Story Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It," 137, 138; prints seven installments of Mark Twain's reminiscences of Mississippi life called "Old Times on the Mississippi," 142, 143; Mark Twain contributes to, 146.
 "Aunt Polly," in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Jane Clemens (q. v.) the original of, 12.
 "Aunt Cord," Mrs. Theodore Crane's cook, tells Mark Twain the story of "A True Story Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It," 137, 138.
 Autobiographical writings of Mark Twain, Mark Twain mentions in arranging with Paine for his biography, 248; Mark Twain dictates memories of his life, 249-253 ff.; chapters published in the *North American Review*, 256; "The Death of Jean" the last of, 284.
 "Awful German Language," Mark Twain's essay on, in the appendix of *A Tramp Abroad*, an example of his humor at its best, 156.

B

- Barstow, business manager of the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise* offers Mark Twain a job, 69.
 Beard, Dan, illustrates *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, 188; Howells thinks Mark Twain's "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" should be illustrated by, 224; with his wife, weaves a wreath for Mark Twain's funeral from laurel at "Stormfield," 244.
 "Becky Thatcher," in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Laura Hawkins the original of, 21.
 Beecher, Henry Ward, on *Quaker City* excursion, 101; advises Mark Twain to contract *The Innocents Abroad* on royalty basis, 109, 110.

- Beecher, the Rev. Thomas K., performs marriage ceremony of Mark Twain and Olivia Langdon, 120.
- Bell, Alexander Graham, Mark Twain refuses to support his new telephone, 162, 163.
- Benjamin, William Everts, son-in-law of H. H. Rogers (*q.v.*), takes over the Library of American Literature (*q.v.*) at Rogers's suggestion, 202, 203.
- Billings, Josh (Henry W. Shaw), Mark Twain meets, in Boston, 119.
- Bispham, David, at the Players' Club dinner in honor of Mark Twain, 215.
- Bixby, Horace, river pilot, takes Mark Twain as an apprentice, 40-43; his character and methods, 44 ff.; temporarily leaves Mark Twain on the Mississippi and goes to the Missouri River, 46; returns to the Mississippi, takes Mark Twain on a trip or two, and then transfers him to Brown, 47; equal partner of Mark Twain as a pilot, 53, 54; his opinion of Mark Twain as a pilot, 53; his memory of Mark Twain scribbling, 54; on Mark Twain's luck on the river, 56; on the *Alonzo Child* with Mark Twain, 56, 57; takes side of the Union and becomes chief of the Union River Service, 57; Mark Twain once more in the pilot house with, 166; Mark Twain's letter to on life as a pilot, 166; Mark Twain meets again, 227; now pilot of a government snagboat, visited by Paine, 267; dies 1912, at the age of eighty-six, 267 *footnote*.
- Blankenship, Ben, father of Tom Blankenship (*q.v.*), the original of the father of "Huckleberry Finn," 18.
- Blankenship, Ben, brother of Tom Blankenship, partly the original of "Huckleberry Finn," 19, 20.
- Blankenship, Tom, the original of "Huckleberry Finn" in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 17, 18; a justice of the peace in the West, 228.
- Bliss, Elisha, Secretary of the American Publishing Company, makes contract with Mark Twain for *The Innocents Abroad*, 109, 110; Mark Twain reports progress on *The Innocents Abroad* and success of lecture to, 111; receives manuscript of *The Innocents Abroad*, 112; meets objections of directors by threat to publish it himself, 112; title of *The Innocents Abroad* in letter from Mark Twain to, 118; contracts with Mark Twain for *Roughing It*, 124; Mark Twain reports to, on progress on *Roughing It*, 126; Mark Twain's praise of, 168.
- Boer War, the, Mark Twain's position on, 220.
- Bones, the dog at Quarry Farm, Mark Twain's affection for, 159.
- Bowen, Sam and Will, schoolmates of Mark Twain in Hannibal, 41.
- Boxer rebellion in China, the, Mark Twain on, 222-225.
- Brick Church, the, New York, Mark Twain's funeral in, 294.
- Briggs, John, the original of "Joe Harper" in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 17, 18; in the incident of the couplet on Mr. Cross, 21, 22; Mark Twain visits their boyhood haunts in Hannibal with, 228, 229; one of three early friends particularly remembered by Mark Twain, 262; tells Paine of his boyhood days with Mark Twain, 266; death of, 266.
- Brown, Dr. John, author of *Rab and His Friends*, attends Olivia Clemens in Edinburgh and becomes good friend of Mark Twain and his family, 135; given a primitive fountain pen by Mark Twain, 160.
- Brown, river pilot served and hated by Mark Twain, 47; beaten in a fight with Mark Twain, 52; victim of the *Pennsylvania* disaster, 53.
- Browne, Charles F., *see* Artemus Ward.
- Brownell, Edward, is told by Mark Twain that he will write, 37.
- Browning, Robert, calls on Mark Twain in London, 134.
- Burbank, the elocutionist, acts in the second and unsuccessful "Colonel Sellers" play, 170, 171.
- "Burial of Moses, the" impresses Mark Twain, 74.
- Burke, Martin G., chief of police of San Francisco, sues the *Territorial Enterprise* for libel because of Mark Twain's attacks in its columns, 86; issues a warrant for Stephen Gillis and forces Mark Twain to leave San Francisco, 87.
- Burlingame, Anson, minister to China, meets, praises, helps, and advises Mark Twain, 93-95.
- Burlingame, Edward, his enthusiasm for "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" brings his father, Anson Burlingame (*q.v.*) and Mark Twain together, 93.

C

- Cable, George W., on lecture tour with Mark Twain, 171, 172.
- Californian*, the, a literary paper, Mark Twain a contributor to, 81; started by Charles Henry Webb, 85; some of Mark Twain's contributions to, included in *Sketches, New and Old*, 86.
- Cannon, "Uncle Joe," Speaker of the House of Representatives, lends his office to Mark Twain, 262.

- "Canty, Tom," in *The Prince and the Pauper*, played by Daisy Warner, 173.
- "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven" published in *Harper's Magazine*, written forty years before, 200.
- Carlton, Artemus Ward's publisher, loses jumping frog story to the *New York Saturday Press*, 91; rejects Mark Twain's first book, his later comment on this, 100.
- Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania and poet, hero-worships Mark Twain in Vienna, her letter to him, 218.
- Carnegie, Andrew, praises "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (*q. v.*) in letter to Mark Twain, 224.
- Carson City, Nevada, Mark Twain in, 62-64, 66; Mark Twain's return to, as a person of consequence, 75.
- Century Company, the, publishes, lose General Grant's *Memoirs* to Mark Twain because unable to foresee their financial success, 176.
- Cervantes, Mark Twain compared to, by Rudyard Kipling, 187.
- Chambrun, the Marquis de, at the christening of the *Mark Twain*, 230.
- Childs, George W., friend of General Grant, advises him to let Mark Twain's firm publish his *Memoirs*, 176, 177.
- Civil War, comes as a surprise to the river pilots, 57; pilots take sides in, 57; Mark Twain encounters it on the *Uncle Sam*, last boat through the lines, 58; Mark Twain's part in, 58, 59, 60; Mark Twain thought it would be short, 61.
- Clagget, "Billy," young lawyer, missing companion of Mark Twain, 65; becomes notary public in Unionville, 66; goes to Carson City as a member of the House and so rejoins Mark Twain, 75.
- Clapp, Henry, editor of the *New York Saturday Press*, publishes "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," 91.
- Claude, Mark Twain's valet, serves him in his last illness, 289, 291.
- Clemens, Benjamin, brother of Mark Twain, two years old on arrival in Florida, Missouri, 1; put to school, 10; dies at the age of ten, 14.
- Clemens, Clara (Mrs. Gabrilowitsch), daughter of Mark Twain, her summers at Quarry Farm, 145; with her sister, requires her father to invent stories of "Emeline" and the cat, 149; taken to Germany and Switzerland, 150-154; happy days at Quarry Farm, 180; the trip around the world, 207-209; returns to America with her mother because of bad news of Susy, 210; the death and burial of her sister Susy, return to England with her mother and Jean, 211, 212; her care of her mother in her last illness, 233-236; her mother's death, 236; Mark Twain says she "wouldn't put up with" some of the things he has to say, 239; helps plan the house at Redding, Connecticut, 257; marries Ossip Gabrilowitsch and goes to live abroad, 280; with her husband in Europe, hears of the death of Jean, 282; with her husband, returns to America on news of her father's serious condition, 286 ff.; with her husband at "Stormfield" at Mark Twain's death, 292 ff.
- Clemens, Henry, born in Florida, Missouri, 1838, 8; the original of "Sid" in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 17; teased and loved by Mark Twain, 13; taken out of school at age of eleven to learn typesetting, 27; works with Mark Twain and Orion Clemens in Keokuk, Iowa, 30; Mark Twain gets him a third clerkship on the *Pennsylvania*, 48; his part in Mark Twain's fight with Brown the pilot, 48-50; his heroic death in the *Pennsylvania* disaster, 1858, 51, 52.
- Clemens, Jane Lampton, mother of Mark Twain, of fine Kentucky family, 2; character and early life, 2; "afraid" young Mark Twain would live, 6; her relations with her children, 7; says Mark Twain was "born to be hanged," 12; her character, 12; the original of "Aunt Polly" in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 12; takes in boarders, 14; her courage and moral opinions, 16; the death of her husband, 21; makes Mark Twain swear not to play cards and not to drink, 31; her reception of Mark Twain on his return to Hannibal from the West, 100; Mark Twain blames himself for his treatment of, in letter to, 105; unable to attend Mark Twain's wedding, 120; Mark Twain's letter to, on English life, 131; birth of her namesake, Jane Lampton Clemens (*q. v.*), 158; Mark Twain's letter to, on his business worries, 163; visited by Mark Twain at Keokuk, hears her son and George Cable read, and dances at the age of eighty-one, 171, 172; death of, 1890, 189.
- Clemens, Jane Lampton, daughter of Mark Twain, named after Mark Twain's mother, but called Jean, born in Elmira, 1880, 158; senses her father's financial strain, 183; her remark on her father's celebrated acquaintances, 195; left in America with her sister Susy in the care of Katie Leary, (*q. v.*), 210; taken to England after the death of Susy, 212; has pneumonia at the time of her

- mother's last illness, 233; her mother's death, 234-236; becomes head of the house at "Stormfield," 230; her sudden death at Stormfield, Dec. 24, 1909, 281-284; "The Death of Jean," 284.
- Clemens, Jean, *see* Clemens, Jane Lampton.
- Clemens, John Marshall, father of Mark Twain, arrives at Florida, Missouri, 1; of Virginia stock, educated as a lawyer, 1; Postmaster of Pall Mall, Tennessee; called "Judge," 2; character and early married life, 2; thirty-six years old on arrival in Florida, Missouri, 2; goes into business with his brother-in-law, 4; builds new house, 1836, 5; his relations with his children, 7; busy with perpetual motion machine, 7; removes with family to Hannibal, Missouri 8; his partnership with John Quarles dissolved, 8; goes into unsuccessful business with his son Orion, 8; his store in Hannibal, 9; forced by poverty to sell the slave girl, 14; creditors take everything from him, 14; practices law, 14; builds house on Hill Street, 1844, 15; prospers, then loses money by investing in silkworm culture, 15; elected clerk of the surrogate court, 23; his final disaster, 23; his faith in the "Tennessee land" to his very end, 23; his last illness and death, March, 1847, 23, 24; his character, 24.
- Clemens, Langdon, son of Mark Twain, born, November 7, 1870, 124; health helped by move to Quarry Farm, Elmira, 124; dies, 1872, in Hartford, 129; Mrs. Clemens buried beside, 237.
- Clemens, Margaret, sister of Mark Twain, five years old on arrival in Florida, Missouri, 1; dies of fever at age of nine, 1839, 8.
- Clemens, Olivia Langdon, wife of Mark Twain, Mark Twain shown a miniature of her face by Charles Langdon (*q. v.*), her brother, on *Quaker City* trip, 108; meets Mark Twain, 1867, when twenty-two years old, 109, 110; courted by Mark Twain in Elmira, her concern over his "accident," 113, 114; engaged to Mark Twain, 115-117; reads proofs of and criticizes *The Innocents Abroad*, 118; her criticism of Mark Twain's work, 118; her marriage to Mark Twain, 120; death of her father, Jervis Langdon (*q. v.*), 123, 124; birth of her son Langdon, (*q. v.*), illness, 124; helped by move to Quarry Farm, Elmira, 124; the move to Hartford, 126, 127; birth of her daughter, Olivia Susan Clemens (*q. v.*), and death of her son, Langdon Clemens, 129; with Mrs. C. D. Warner challenges Warner and her husband to write a novel, 132; trip to England, and her illness there, 134-136; ill in Edinburgh, but regrets leaving there, 135; her character and the home she made, 139; Howells's opinion of, 140; the trip to Germany and Switzerland, 150-154; birth of a daughter, Jane Lampton Clemens (*q. v.*), 158; her daughter Susan's remark on her love for "morals," 159; Mark Twain's letter to on the changes in river life, 167; surprises Mark Twain by making a play of *The Prince and the Pauper*, 172, 173; at Quarry Farm, 180; entertains Rudyard Kipling at Quarry Farm, 186, 187; death of her mother, 180; the departure from Hartford, 190; compares Mark Twain to "Colonel Sellers" (*q. v.*), 203; depressed by the Webster failure, 205; the trip around the world, 207-209; returns to America, on account of bad news of Susy, 210; hears of Susy's death, the burial and return to England with Clara and Jean, 211, 212; on the anniversary of Susy's death, 214; her love for Dollis Hill House, 221; the beginning of her last illness, 232; her illness permits only a few minutes a day with her husband, 233-235; her trust in her daughter Clara, 2335 her last greeting to Howells, his description of her, 234; her last day with her family, and her death in Florence, June 5, 1903, 235-237; Mark Twain's love for, 237.
- Clemens, Olivia Susan (called Susy), born, March, 1872, named after her mother and aunt, 129; taken to England with her mother and father 134; made a pet by Dr. John Brown (*q. v.*), who calls her "Megalopis," 135; her summers at Quarry Farm, 145; with Clara, her sister, requires her father to invent stories of "Emeline" and the cat, 149; taken to Germany and Switzerland, 150-151; her remark about her father's and mother's tastes, 159; plays the Prince in her mother's version of *The Prince and the Pauper*, 173; happy days at Quarry Farm, 180; her "biography" of Mark Twain, 180; treasures card given her by Rudyard Kipling, 186, 187; her excitement over *Joan of Arc*, 206; says good-bye to her mother, father, and sister Clara, 207; her illness causes her mother and sister Clara to return from England, 210; her death reported to Mark Twain, 211; the permanent effect of her death on her father, 211; her last illness, death (August 18, 1896), and burial, 211, 212; Mark Twain's

- comment on, after her death, 213; Mark Twain's poem, "In Memoriam" to, 214; Mark Twain's constant memory of, 219; Mrs. Clemens buried beside, 237; Mark Twain recalls her death in a letter to Howells, 237.
- Clemens, Orion, brother of Mark Twain, ten years old on arrival in Florida, Missouri, 1; goes into unsuccessful business with his father at the age of thirteen, 8; a clerk in his father's store, 9, 10; printer's apprentice in office of *Hannibal Journal*, 10; his character, 10; goes to St. Louis as a journeyman printer, 14; threatens to drag Mark Twain to Sunday school, 16; returns to St. Louis after the death of John Clemens, and helps his family, 21; buys the *Hannibal Journal*, 21; attempts to get something for the Tennessee land, 28; his ups and downs with the *Hannibal Journal*, 28, 29, 30; his comment on Mark Twain as a printer, 28; his comment on Mark Twain as a journalist, 29; sells the *Hannibal Journal* and goes to Iowa, 30; his comment on Mark Twain's departure from Hannibal, 31; owns a paper in Muscatine, Iowa, 34; marries, moves to Keokuk, Iowa, hires Mark Twain as a printer, 36; loses Mark Twain because unable to pay wages, 38; given money and advice by Mark Twain, 54; letter from Mark Twain to, on a dinner, 57; appointed Secretary of Nevada territory, is financed by Mark Twain and takes him West as his private secretary, 60, 61; his excessive economy as Territorial Secretary, 63; Mark Twain's letters to, from mining camp, 67; Mark Twain's letter to, on the *Enterprise* job, 69; Mark Twain blames himself for his treatment of, in letter to Jane Clemens, 105; unable to attend Mark Twain's wedding, 120; now in Keokuk again, is persuaded by Mark Twain to write his autobiography, 156, 157; his autobiography rejected by Howells for the *Atlantic*, 157; given a steady allowance by Mark Twain, 158; helps Mark Twain on the history game enterprise, 169; visited in Keokuk by Mark Twain, 171; death of, 1897, 215.
- Clemens, Pamela (Mrs. [William A. Moffet], sister of Mark Twain, eight years old on arrival in Florida, Missouri, 1; put to school, 10; complimented by Mrs. Horr for her schoolwork, 13; at the death of her father, 23, 24; the original of "Cousin Mary" in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 24; gives music lessons and helps the family, 24; marries William A. Moffet of St. Louis, 30; letter to, from Mark Twain, describing Crystal Palace, 32; visited by Mark Twain in St. Louis, 32; Mark Twain's letter to on his unwillingness to give up in the West, 63; a widow, attends Mark Twain's wedding with her daughter Anne, 120.
- Clemens, Samuel Langhorne, *see* Mark Twain.
- Clemens, Susy, *see* Clemens, Olivia Susan.
- Collins, Willie, fascinated by Mark Twain in London, 134.
- Constock Lodge, Virginia City, Nevada, makes the *Territorial Enterprise* powerful, 71; Mark Twain's memories of, 250.
- "Concerning the Jews," Mark Twain's article, written in Vienna, 218.
- Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, A, begun, in 1896, progress on, in 1888, 1892, 1893; illustrated by Dan Beard, 188; finished, and published by Webster and Co., 188; praised by Howells, 188; Mrs. Clemens did not criticize, 189; not popular, especially in England, 189; Andrew Lang finds little in it to praise, 189; Howells thinks Mark Twain's "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" should be illustrated by Dan Beard, with drawings like those in, 224.
- Coon, Ben, old pilot, tells Mark Twain the jumping frog story, 89.
- Cooper Union, Mark Twain meets Thomas Nast at the time of the former's first lecture there, 148.
- "Cousin Mary," in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Pamela Clemens the original of, 24.
- Crane, Mrs. Theodore, sister of Olivia Clemens, welcomes Mark Twain and family to her home, Quarry Farm, Elmira, New York, 124; builds Mark Twain a study at Quarry Farm, 137; Mark Twain's dream of his life, in letter to, 200; goes from Quarry Farm to Hartford to care for Susy Clemens in her last illness, 212.
- Croker, Richard, Tammany chief, Mark Twain's successful speech against, 226.
- Cross, Mr., teacher of Mark Twain, his school, 21; Mark Twain's verse on, 21, 22.
- Crystal Palace, in New York, visited by Mark Twain, 32.
- Cutter, Bloodgood H., of Long Island, the "Poet Lariat" of the *Quaker City Holy Land Excursion*, 106.

D

- "Damned human race," a favorite phrase of Mark Twain's, 222, 227.
- Darwin, Charles, meets Mark Twain

- and tells him his use of *The Innocents Abroad*, 154.
 De Quille, Dan, *see* Wright, William.
 Densmore, California writer produces illegally a play based on *The Gilded Age* and is bought out, 138.
 Dickens, Charles, Mark Twain hears him read from *David Copperfield*, 110.
 Dilke, Sir Charles, calls on Mark Twain in London, 134.
Dog's Tale, A, written at Quarry Farm, Mark Twain's last work there, 234.
 Dollis Hill House, Mark Twain's favorite home in England, 220, 221.
 Doubleday, Frank, Kipling's publisher, Kipling gives his opinion of Mark Twain in a letter to, 187.
 Dvorák, visits Mark Twain in Vienna, 218.

E

- Edward VII, King of England (when Prince of Wales), first intended by Mark Twain to be the original of the Prince in *The Prince and the Pauper*, 147; meets Mark Twain in Germany, 197.
 "Ellerslie," the house of the Clemens and Crane children at Quarry Farm, 179, 180.
 "Emeline," Mark Twain's stories of, 149.
Enterprise, the Virginia City, *see* *Territorial Enterprise*.
Eve's Diary, written partly at Tyringham, conveys Mark Twain's love for his wife, 238; finished, 240.
Evening Mail, the New York, comments on the demand for Mark Twain at banquets and meetings, 254.
Evening News, the St. Louis, Mark Twain sets type for, 32.
Express, the Buffalo, Mark Twain becomes third owner and editor of, 119; Mark Twain's work on, not his best, 123; Mark Twain sells his interest in, 124.

F

- Fairbanks, Mrs. A. W., correspondent for her husband's paper, the *Cleveland Herald*, on the *Quaker City-Holy Land Excursion*, 106, 107; her influence on Mark Twain's letters from the *Quaker City Holy Land Excursion*, 107; Mark Twain confides in her about his courtship, 114.
 "Faust," Mark Twain plays the flower song from, 261, 262.
 Florida, Missouri, arrival of John and Jane Clemens at, 1; described, 4.
Following the Equator, tells fully and sufficiently faithfully of Mark Twain's trip around the world, 208; written

- in Chelsea, London, 212, 213; published November, 1897, well received, helps pay the debts, 215.
 Francis, Governor of Missouri, at the christening of the *Mark Twain*, 230.
 Fraser, Captain, of the *Bermudian*, blows his whistle for Mark Twain when the latter is mortally ill in Bermuda, 238.
 French language, Mark Twain's study of, 198.
French Revolution, The, by Thomas Carlyle, Mark Twain reads, in his last illness, 292, 293.
 Frohman, Daniel, produces dramatic version of *The Prince and the Pauper*, 187, 188.
 Fuller, Frank, manages Mark Twain's Cooper Union lecture, 101-104.

G

- Gabrilowitsch, Clara Clemens, *see* Clemens, Clara.
 Gabrilowitsch, Ossip, Russian pianist, marries Clara Clemens, 280.
Galaxy, the, Mark Twain's column, called "Memoranda" in, 123; Mark Twain gives up his column in, 124.
 Garfield, General, Mark Twain introduces General Grant at a meeting in which the latter speaks in behalf of, 160.
 Garth, John, one of three early friends particularly remembered by Mark Twain, 262.
 Genung, Charles Harvey, at the Players' Club dinner in honor of Mark Twain, suggests that Paine write Mark Twain's biography, 2-5 ff.
Gilded Age, The, James Lampton, original of "Colonel Mulberry Sellers" in, 2; Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner (*q. v.*) write in collaboration, 132, 133; an illegal dramatic production bought out, 138; Mark Twain's own dramatic version of, produced with great success, 138.
 Cilder, Richard Watson, at the Players' Club dinner in honor of Mark Twain, 245.
 Gillespie, clerk of Nevada House, coaches Mark Twain in parliamentary matters, 74.
 Gillette, William, funds for his education provided by Mark Twain, 188; intimate with Mark Twain's family, 188; with Mark Twain, embroiders a pair of slippers for Elsie Leslie (*q. v.*), 188.
 Gillis, James N., brother of Stephen Gillis (*q. v.*), takes Mark Twain to his mining camp in the Tuolumne Hills, 87; the original of Bret Harte's "Truthful James," 87; his character,

- home, and stories, 87, 88; Mark Twain's days at his cabin, 88; goes with Mark Twain and Lick Stoker to Angel's Camp, in Calaveras County, 88; misses a gold mine through Mark Twain, 90, 91; Mark Twain's letter to, before his (Mark Twain's) wedding, 120; unable to see Paine, 266.
- Gillis, Stephen E., called Steve, compositor on the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, and close friend of Mark Twain, plays jokes on the latter, 72, 73; gets Mark Twain into a "duel" and is forced to leave Virginia City, goes with Mark Twain to San Francisco, 82; becomes a compositor on the San Francisco *Morning Call*, 83; fights a barkeeper, is bailed out by Mark Twain and flies to Virginia City, 86, 87; back on the *Enterprise*, hoxes Mark Twain in Virginia City, 98, 99; meets Paine, tells him of his memories of Mark Twain, and sends a last message to Mark Twain, 266, 267.
- Gladstone, W. E., once a resident of Dolans Hill House, loved by Mark Twain, 220.
- Gold Dust*, the, Mississippi boat on which Mark Twain tries his hand as a pilot years later, 164.
- Golden Era*, the, San Francisco, offices of, a gathering place of the writers in the early days, 85.
- Goodman, Joseph T., called Joe, owner and editor of the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, offers Mark Twain a job, 68; his joke on Artemus Ward, 78, 79; allows Mark Twain to attack police department of San Francisco in the columns of the *Enterprise*, 86; Mark Twain meets him again in Virginia City, 98; informs Mark Twain of proposed publication of *The Innocents Abroad* by Alta California, 111; visits Mark Twain at Quarry Farm and helps him with *Roughing It*, 125, 126; Paine meets, 266.
- "Governor" Mark Twain, 81, 82.
- Grant, Colonel Fred, son of General Grant, advises his father to let Mark Twain's firm publish his *Memoirs*, 176, 177.
- Grant, General (then Colonel), frightens Mark Twain's "company" in the Southern army, 60; introduced by Mark Twain at a meeting in Hartford, 160, 161; his articles in the *Century Magazine*, 175, 177; contracts with Mark Twain and Charles L. Webster & Co., for his *Memoirs*, 175-177; in spite of mortal illness and with Mark Twain's encouragement, he writes his *Memoirs*, 177-179; his death, 178; tremendous success of his *Memoirs*, 178, 179; Mark Twain's estimate of, 179; Mark Twain's triumphal tour compared to that of, 208.
- Gray, John A., and Green, printers, of New York, hire Mark Twain, 33.

II

- Hall, young man in charge of Charles L. Webster & Co. (q. v.), 196; Mark Twain's instructions to, 200.
- Halley's comet, visible on night of birth of Mark Twain, 8; visible, as Mark Twain had wished, but without his knowledge, the night before his death, 233.
- Holteid, Murat, unintentionally sails for Germany with his wife and daughter, Mark Twain and his family and Bayard Taylor, 130.
- Hammond, John Lays, visited by Mark Twain in South Africa, while a prisoner of the Jameson raid, 209.
- Hannibal, Missouri, removal of Clemens family to, 8; described, 9; Mark Twain's triumphant return to, 100; Mark Twain finds much changed, 166, 167; Mark Twain lectures at, with Cable, 171, 172; Mark Twain's day with John Briggs in and about the old *Tom Sawyer* haunts in, 228, 229.
- Harper & Brothers, get book rights of *Joan of Arc*, 206; Colonel George Harvey, head of, arranges a dinner for Mark Twain's seventieth birthday, 210-242.
- "Harper, Joe," in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, John Briggs the original of, 17, 18.
- Harper's Magazine*, accepts Mark Twain's article on the *Foranet* disaster, 96; anonymous publication of *Joan of Arc* in, 206, 207; Mark Twain's poem, "In Memoriam," published in, 214; publishes "Captain Stormfield's visit to Heaven," 269.
- Harper's Weekly*, Rogers's cartoon of Mark Twain as "Tom Sawyer" in, 224.
- "Harris," in *A Tramp Abroad*, the Rev. Joseph Twitshell (q. v.) the original of, 156.
- Harte, Bret, one of the writers in San Francisco in the '60's, 85; once a printer on the *Golden Era*, 85; the Tuolumne Hills the scene of his *Roaring Camp* and *Sandy Bar*, 87; visits Hartford and writes an unsuccessful play, "Ah Sin," with Mark Twain, 146.
- Harvey, Colonel George, head of Harper & Brothers, arranges a dinner

- for Mark Twain's seventieth birthday, 210-212.
- Harvey, Dorothy, daughter of Col. George Harvey (*q. n.*) visits Mark Twain at "Stormfield" when fourteen years old, 274.
- Hawkins, Laura, the original of "Becky Thatcher" in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and an early sweetheart of Mark Twain, 21; one of three early friends particularly remembered by Mark Twain, 262.
- Hay, John, praises highly Mark Twain's "Old Times on the Mississippi" articles, 143; death of, 1903, 240.
- "Hendon, Miles," in *The Prince and the Pauper*, Mark Twain plays part of, in home production, 173.
- Herndon, Lieutenant, his book on the Amazon excites Mark Twain, 38.
- Higbie, Calvin H., mining companion of Mark Twain, 66.
- Hingham, Dick, works with Mark Twain and his brothers as a printer in Keokuk, Iowa, 36.
- Hooker house, the, in Hartford, Mark Twain moves to, 127.
- Hornet*, the, Mark Twain's great scoop on the disaster and survivors of, 93-95; article on, accepted by *Harper's Magazine*, 96.
- Horr, Mrs. E., Mark Twain's first teacher, 12; compliments Pamela Clemens for her school work, 13.
- Houghton, Lord, calls on Mark Twain in London, 134.
- Howells, John Mead, architect, son of William Dean Howells (*q. v.*), draws the plans for Mark Twain's house at Redding, Connecticut, 257.
- Howells, Mildred, daughter of William Dean Howells (*q. v.*), her memoirs of Mark Twain's visits to her father's home in Cambridge, 144.
- Howells, Mrs. William Dean, her comment on Mark Twain's visits to her home, 145.
- Howells, William Dean, Mark Twain meets, in *Atlantic Monthly* office, 119; Mark Twain sees much of, in Boston, 127; his comment on Mark Twain's first reception in England, 130; Mark Twain's happy days with, in Hartford, 137; accepts for the *Atlantic Monthly* Mark Twain's "A True Story Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It," 137, 138; his opinion of Olivia Clemens, 140; accepts for the *Atlantic Monthly* and praises Mark Twain's "Old Times on the Mississippi" articles, 142; his account in *My Mark Twain*, of Mark Twain's arrival in Cambridge after his "walk" from Hartford, 142; Mark Twain gives him a typewriter, 143; as a host to Mark Twain in Cambridge, 144; his letter to Mark Twain on the latter's visit to Cambridge, 145; Mark Twain's letter to, on *A Tramp Abroad*, 155; Mark Twain's letter to, explaining the idea *The Prince and the Pauper*, 155; keeps after Mark Twain for stories for the *Atlantic Monthly*, 156; given a primitive fountain pen by Mark Twain, 160; Mark Twain's letter to, on the difficulties of writing by contract, 167; Mark Twain's letter to, on the history game, 169; collaborates with Mark Twain on the second, and unsuccessful, play, about "Colonel Mulberry Sellers," 170, 171; considers lecture tour with Mark Twain, Cable, and Aldrich, 171; Mark Twain's letter to, calling *A Connecticut Yankee* a "swan song," 189; Mark Twain writes to, describing himself as a "mind image," 213; Mark Twain's letter to, on a favorite book of Susy Clemens's, 219, 220; compares Mark Twain's courage to that of Sir Walter Scott, 221; notices the strain of Mark Twain's triumph on him, 222; his comment on Mark Twain's "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," 224; Mark Twain's letter to, on Mrs. Clemens's escape from her husband's phrase, "the damned human race," 227; a summer near Mark Twain in Maine, 232; Mrs. Clemens's last greeting to, 234; Mark Twain's letter to, on Susy, after the death of the latter, 237; Mark Twain says he can't "work his bile off" on, 239; Mark Twain suggests, as one of the guests of a small seventieth birthday dinner, 240; he introduces Mark Twain at the great seventieth birthday dinner, 241; his words on seeing his friend's face for the last time, 295.
- "Huckleberry Finn," in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Tom Blankenship the original of, 17, 18.
- Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of*, the adventure of Ben Blankenship and the original of "Jim" in, 20; begun at Quarry Farm, but pigeon-holed, 145, 150; Mark Twain makes progress on, 158, 159; finished, 170; letter to Howells on the speed of the finish, 170; published and a great success, 174, 175; R. L. Stevenson's opinion of, 175; Andrew Lang's opinion of, 175; Mark Twain delving through, 247.
- Humboldt mining region, Mark Twain's trip to, 65, 66.
- Hutchinson, Ellen Mackay, co-editor of a Library of American Literature, which is unsuccessfully published by Charles L. Webster (*q. n.*), 181.

I

- "In Memoriam," Mark Twain's poem written on the anniversary of the death of Susy Clemens, published in *Harper's Magazine*, 214.
- Innocents Abroad*, *The*, tells accurately the story of the *Quaker City* Holy Land Excursion (*q. v.*), 106, 107; originals of characters in, 108; contracted for with the American Publishing Company, 103, 110; Mark Twain reports progress on, 111; manuscript of, delivered to Bliss, who meets his director's objections to it with a threat and goes ahead, 112; title in letter to Bliss, 118; Mark Twain and Olivia Langdon read proofs of, 113; publication and immediate success, 118, 119; Charles Harwin's use of, 164; Paine's memory of first hearing of Mark Twain as author of, 212, 214; Paine follows the route of, 216.
- Inquirer*, the Philadelphia, Mark Twain a printer for, 34.
- Irving, Sir Henry, death of, 1905, 210.

J

- Jackson, Dr. A. Reeves, of Chicago, on the *Quaker City* Holy Land Excursion, and the original of "Doctor" in *The Innocents Abroad*, 106.
- Jameson raid, in South Africa, Mark Twain visits the prisoners, including John Hays Hammond, captured in, 209.
- "Jews, Concerning the," Mark Twain's article, written in Vienna, 218.
- "Jim," or "Nigger Jim," in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the adventure of Ben Blankenship and the original of, 20.
- "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," Mark Twain hears the story of, 89; Mark Twain writes it up for Artemus Ward, published in New York *Saturday Press*, a great success, praised by J. R. Lowell, 91, 92.
- Joan of Arc, Mark Twain deeply impressed by a leaf from a history of, 26; Mark Twain tells Paine how he first became interested in Joan, 246.
- Joan of Arc, Personal Recollections of*, Mark Twain begins writing in Florence, 197; Mark Twain's preparation for writing 28, 197, 198; his rapid progress on, 198; what it meant to Mark Twain, his intention to publish it anonymously, 198; Mark Twain thought of, as a companion piece to *The Prince and the Pauper*, 198; Susy Clemens's excitement over, 206; rapid progress on, 206; book rights to Harpers, anonymous publication in

Harper's Magazine but authorship suspected, 206, 207; see also Joan of Arc.

- John J. Roe, Mark Twain has an easy time as a cub on the, 47.
- Johnson, Colonel Richard Malcolm, Mark Twain lectures with, free, 183, 184.
- Jokai, visits Mark Twain in Vienna, 218.
- "Josh," Mark Twain's signature to sketches in the *Territorial Enterprise*, 68.
- Journal*, the Hannibal, bought by Orion Clemens, 27; Mark Twain's adventures on, 28, 29; ups and downs of, under Orion Clemens's control, 28, 29, 30; sold by Orion Clemens, 30.
- Jumping frog story, Mark Twain says it began his good fortune, 120; see Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" and *The Jumping Frog and Other Sketches*.
- Jumping Frog and Other Sketches, The*, put together by Charles Henry Webb, rejected by Carlton, published by Webb, and a success, 99-102.

K

- Kemble, Fanny, plays in unsuccessful competition with Mark Twain, 115.
- Kerr, Orpheus C., one of the writers in San Francisco in the '60's, 85.
- "Killing of Julius Caesar Localized, The," contributed by Mark Twain to the *Californian* and later included in *Sketches, New and Old*, 86.
- Kinney, John, with Mark Twain at Lake Tahoe, 64.
- Kipling, Rudyard, visits Quarry Farm and Mark Twain when an unknown newspaperman, 186, 187; identified by George Warner's copy of *Plain Tales* and a newspaper article, 187; his opinion of Mark Twain, in a letter to Frank Doubleday, 187; Mark Twain's opinion of, 187.
- Klinefelter, Captain of the *Pennsylvania*, 49-51; Mark Twain steersman under, 53.

L

- "Lair, the," Mark Twain's cabin at Saranac Lake, 226.
- Laampton, James, relative of Jane Clemens, original of "Colonel Mulberry Sellers" in *The Gilded Age*, 2, 132, 133.
- Laampton, Jane, see Clemens, Jane Laampton.
- Lang, Andrew, his opinion of *Huckleberry Finn*, 175.
- Lang, Andrew, finds little in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* to praise, 189.

- Langdon, Charles A., of Elmira, New York, on the *Quaker City* Holy Land Excursion, and the original of "Charlie" in *The Innocents Abroad*, later Mark Twain's brother-in-law, 106; introduces Mark Twain to his sister and father, 110; alarmed by Mark Twain's intentions with regard to Olivia Langdon, 113; goes to Hartford with Mrs. Crane to care for Susy Clemens in her last illness, 212.
- Langdon, Jervis, meets and approves of Mark Twain, 110, 111; father of Olivia Langdon Clemens, accepts Mark Twain as a son-in-law despite the letters of the latter's friends, 115-117; helps Mark Twain buy third of Buffalo Express, 119; gives his daughter Olivia and Mark Twain a house in Buffalo, 121, 122; dies, 123, 124.
- Langdon, Jervis, the younger, at the burial of Jean Clemens, 282.
- Langdon, Olivia, *see* Clemens, Olivia Langdon.
- Langham Hotel, London, where Mark Twain stayed on second trip, thronged with notables, 134.
- Lathrop, Gardner, his tribute to Mark Twain on the occasion of the granting of the Doctor of Laws degree to Mark Twain by the University of Missouri, 230.
- Leary, Katie, old servant of Mark Twain's family, reports Susy Clemens's last illness, 210; with Mark Twain's family in Florence at the time of the death of Mrs. Clemens, 234-236; her emotion over the old Hartford furniture moved to New York, 238.
- Leavenworth, Zeb, pilot of the *Uncle Sam*, last boat through the war lines, 58.
- Lenbach, visits Mark Twain in Vienna, 218.
- Leo XIII, Pope, sanctions and blesses life of himself published by Charles L. Webster (*q. v.*), 181.
- Leschetzky, visits Mark Twain in Vienna, 218.
- Leslie, Elsie, plays the Prince and "Tom Canty" in the dramatic version of *The Prince and the Pauper*, 188; plays with the Clemens children, 188; a pair of slippers embroidered for her by Mark Twain and William Gillette, 188.
- Library of American Literature, A, edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson, unsuccessfully published by Charles L. Webster (*q. v.*), 181; threatens to ruin Charles L. Webster & Co., 196; taken over by W. E. Benjamin, son-in-law of H. H. Rogers, for \$50,000, 202, 203.
- Life of Pope Leo XIII*, published by Charles L. Webster (*q. v.*) does not succeed as anticipated, 181.
- Life of Thomas Nast*, *The*, by Albert Bigelow Paine, brings its author and Mark Twain together, 244.
- Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain's account of his "running away" as a boy, in it, fiction, 40; in it Mark Twain tells of his learning to be a pilot, 44 ff.; passages from, quoted, 45, 47, 50; Mark Twain returns to the Mississippi to get material to add to the "Old Times on the Mississippi" articles (*q. v.*) and make, 161-166; Mark Twain's struggles with, 167; published by Osgood, a great success in America and Europe, and eventually profitable, 168; first twenty chapters, the best, first published as "Old Times on the Mississippi" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 168.
- Locke, David R., true name of Petroleum B. Nasby (*q. v.*).
- "Lonetree Hill," Mark Twain's place at Dublin, New Hampshire, 240.
- Loomis, Mr. and Mrs. Edward, relatives of Mark Twain, visited by him on the eve of his last sailing for Bermuda, 285.
- "Lost Napoleon, the," Mark Twain's unpublished article on a mountain profile of his discovery, 193; found by Paine, 193.
- Low, Seth, supported by Mark Twain in his successful campaign against Croker of Tammany, 226.
- Ludlow, Fitzhugh, one of the writers in San Francisco in the '60's, 85.

M

- McCarthy, Denis E., part owner of the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, meets Mark Twain when he comes for a job, 70; engaged by Mark Twain as lecture manager, 97.
- McClellan, General, his book published by Charles L. Webster (*q. v.*), 181.
- McClure Syndicate, the, Mark Twain arranges with for a series of letters from Europe, 190.
- McComb, Colonel John, editor of *Alla California*, encourages Mark Twain to lecture, 96; gets *Alla California* to send Mark Twain on *Quaker City* Excursion, 101.
- McCormick, Wales, an apprentice, with Mark Twain, in the *Courier* office, 25.
- McMurray, Pet, a journeyman printer in the office of the *Courier* when Mark Twain was there, his letter on those times written years later. 25. 26.

MacDaniel, Jimmie, the confectioner's son, friend of Mark Twain in school, 20.

Macfarlane, room-mate of Mark Twain in Cincinnati, his advanced ideas impress Mark Twain, 39.

Mackay, John, Virginia City miner refuses to trade jobs with Mark Twain, 77.

"Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, the," written in Vienna, 219.

Mark Twain,

1835-1857

His father, John Clemens (q. r.) and mother, Jane Lampton Clemens (q. r.) migrate to Florida, Missouri, 1. born in Florida, Missouri, November 30, 1835, 5; named Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 5; Hailey's comet visible on night of birth of, 5; his feeble infancy, 6; his early childhood, 6; a child he sees, the capture of a runaway slave, 7; his pleasure at the home of his uncle John Quarles, 7; his family removes from Florida, Missouri, to Hannibal, Missouri, 8; his early environment in Hannibal, 9; part of each summer as a child at John Quarles's farm, 10; delicate and mischievous as a child, 10; his summers as a child on farm of John Quarles, 11; his memories, sixty years later, of his summers as a child on the farm of John Quarles, 11; sent to school at the age of five, 11; rescued from drowning, "born to be hanged," 12; elaborates largely on fact, 12; his adventure with the shaving in Mrs. Horr's school, 12, 13; his dislike for school, 13; considered a good speller as a boy, 13; impressed by the grief of his parents over the death of Benjamin Clemens, 14; impressed as a boy by sale of slave girl, 14; his rapid education in life, he sees men killed on the street, 15; himself the original of "Tom Sawyer," 15; his real boyhood begins about 1844, 15; a good swimmer, 16; effect of the river on his imagination, 16; tortured by his conscience, but detests Sunday school, 16; his character and appearance as a boy, 17; learns to smoke and swear, 17; his frolics with Tom Blankenship, the original of "Huckleberry Finn," 18; long swims as a boy, 18, 19; the cave and Indian Joe, 19; his love of leadership and the spectacular, 19; the escape of "Jim," 20; his school friends, 20; his girl friends when a boy, 20, 21; his first literary attempt, the verse on Mr. Cross, 21, 22; his dislike for school, 22; the death of his father, 23, 24; his

promise to his mother after the death of his father, 24; becomes a printer's apprentice in the office of the Hannibal *Courier*, 24, 25; his progress as a printer, 26; finds a leaf from a history of Joan of Arc, and is deeply impressed, 26; in the Hannibal *Journal* office under his brother Orion Clemens, 27, 28; his poem, "To Mary in 11-4," 29; his first adventure as a journalist, on the Hannibal *Journal*, 28, 29; has two anecdotes accepted by *The Saturday Evening Post* when sixteen years old, 29; takes an oath and goes to St. Louis, June, 1855, 31; sets type for St. Louis *Evening News*, 32; goes to New York for first time, 32; impressed by Crystal Palace, 32; works as a printer in New York, 33; dislikes New York, 33; goes to Philadelphia, 34; home-sick for the South, 34; goes back to the West, 34, 35; memorizes English sovereigns, 35; again on St. Louis *Evening News*, 36; in Keokuk, Iowa, working as a printer for Orion Clemens, 36; popular as a wag, 36; tells Edward Brownell he will write, 37; a considerable reader as a young man, 37; decides to go up the Amazon, 38; finds fifty dollar bill and goes to Cincinnati, 38, 39; writes letters of travel for Keokuk *Saturday Post*, 39; impressed by advanced ideas of room-mate named Macfarlane, 39.

1857-1867

Takes passage for the South on the *Paul Jones*, 40; becomes an apprentice to Horace Dixby, river pilot, 40-43; gets on a better boat, 43; his task and future as a pilot's cub, 44; incidents of his life as a pilot's cub, 45 ff.; his river notebook, 46; acquires knowledge of the river and river men, 46; has an easy time on the *John J. Roe*, 47; with Dixby again for a short time, 47; *Pennsylvania*, the river boat in which Mark Twain serves under Brown, 47; infernal time with Brown in the *Pennsylvania*, 47 ff.; adventures on the river, 48; night watchman on levees in New Orleans, thinking of stories, 48; a fight in the pilot house, and how it saved his life, 49 ff.; gives parting advice to Henry Clemens in New Orleans, 50; the explosion on the *Pennsylvania* and the death of Henry Clemens, 51, 52; the permanent effect of Henry Clemens's death on him, 52; gets a full license as a Mississippi pilot, September, 1858, 53; equal partner with Dixby as a pilot, 53; Horace Dixby's opinion of him as a pilot, 53; scribbles for New Orleans

Mark Twain—*Cont.*

papers, 54; prospers as a pilot and helps his family, 54; happiest days of his life as a pilot, 54; how he acquired the name Mark Twain, 54, 55; his appearance during his pilot period, 55; regarded by the pilots as a great reader, 55; studies French in New Orleans, 55, 56; his luck on the river, 56; his river notebook, quoted, 56; on the *Alonzo Child* with Horace Bixby, 56, 57; war comes as a momentous surprise, 57; undecided about war, starts for home, 57, 58; the Civil War ends his pilot days, his pride in that profession, 58; runs into the Civil War on the *Uncle Sam*, 58; reaches Hannibal and joins a company of volunteers for the South, 59; his company camps at Salt River in a barn, is scared by Colonel Ulysses Grant, is washed out by rain, and disbands, 59, 60; sprains his ankle and joins Orion Clemens at Keokuk, 60; helps Orion Clemens with money and starts for Nevada with him, 60-62; an adventurous journey into the West, 62; arrives in Carson City, Nevada, 62, 63; his appearance and story-telling in the West, 63; establishes a timber claim on Lake Tahoe, 64; unsuccessful trip to Humboldt region as a prospector, 65, 66; prospector in Esmeralda region, 66-69; hard labor and failure as a miner, 66, 67; experience in a quartz mill, 68; near fortune in the "Wide West" mine, 68; contributes sketches to the *Territorial Enterprise*, 68; is offered and considers job on the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, 68, 69; walks one hundred and thirty miles to Virginia City and takes job on the *Enterprise*, 69, 70; equipped for writing by his mining experiences, 71; a victim of jokes by *Enterprise* men, 72; impressed by "The Burial of Moses," 73, 74; begins to use the name "Mark Twain," 75, 76; reports the session of the Nevada legislature for the *Territorial Enterprise*, 74-76; his letters to the *Enterprise* known up and down the Coast, 76; helps his family, 77; frontier life, 77; meets Artemus Ward, 78; adventures with Artemus Ward in Virginia City, 78-80; contributes to the New York *Sunday Mercury*, 80; makes his first speech, as "Governor" of Nevada, 81; "forced out of Virginia City by a 'duel,'" goes to San Francisco with Steve Gillis (*q. v.*) and Joe Goodman (*q. v.*), 82; reaches San Francisco, May, 1864, and becomes a reporter on the *Morning Call*, 83; rooms with Stephen Gillis in San Francisco, 83;

dislikes work on *Morning Call* and soon leaves it, 83, 84; writes letters for the *Enterprise* from San Francisco, 84; contributes to the *Californian*, 84; one of a group of writers in San Francisco, 85; attacks San Francisco police department in letters to the *Enterprise* and raises a furor, 86; goes bond for Stephen Gillis and has to flee from San Francisco to Tuolumne Hills, 86, 87; life at Gillis's cabin, 88; absorbs James Gillis's stories, 88; at Angel's Camp, 88-90; hears the jumping frog story, 89; misses a gold mine by one pail of water, 90, 91; back in San Francisco, writes the jumping frog story for Artemus Ward, 91; surprised by success of jumping frog story, 92; four months in Hawaiian Islands for the Sacramento *Union*, 92-95; his great newspaper scoop on the *Hornet* disaster, 93-95; meets Anson Burlingame, 93; returns to San Francisco, 95; lecture tour in the West, 97-99; his first lecture a great success, 96, 97; his appearance and manner in his early lectures, 97, 98; hoaxed by Gillis and McCarthy in Virginia City, 98, 99; goes home by way of Nicaragua and New York, 99; triumphant return to Hannibal and Keokuk, 100; *The Jumping Frog* rejected by Carlton (*q. v.*) and published by Webb (*q. v.*), 99-102; gets *Alta California* to send him on *Quaker City* Excursion, 100, 101; lectures in Cooper Union, 101-104; his depression, 105; blames himself for his treatment of his family, 105;

1867-1885

Sails on the *Quaker City*, 106; his particular friends on the *Quaker City*, 106, 107; his notebooks of the *Quaker City* trip, 107, 108; see also *Quaker City Holy Land Excursion* and *The Innocents Abroad*; Charles Langdon shows him a miniature of his sister, Olivia Langdon, see Clemens, Olivia Langdon, 108; his letters to the *Alta California* and New York *Tribune* on the *Quaker City* Excursion, 108, 109; arrives at New York, goes to Washington to be secretary to Senator Stewart, 109; gets offer for publication of travel letters, and, with advice of Henry Ward Beecher, signs contract, 109, 110; meets Olivia Langdon and her father, 110, 111; hears Charles Dickens read, 110; goes West to see *Alta California* about *The Innocents Abroad*, 111; successful lecture tour in the West, 111, 112; his lecture posters, 112; delivers manuscript of *The Innocents Abroad*

Mark Twain—*Cont.*

to Illinois, 112; visits the Langdons in Elmira and progresses in his love affair despite difficulties, 113, 114; lectures successfully in the East, 114; meets J. J. Twichell (*q. v.*) and the literary group at Hartford, 114; reports progress of his courtship to Mrs. Fannin, 114, 115; "plays" successfully against Fanny Kemble, 115; is "recommended" to Mr. Langdon by his friends and formally engaged to Olivia Langdon, 114-117; gives successful lecture tour, 118; reads proofs of *The Innocents Abroad*, 118; publication and success of *The Innocents Abroad*, 118, 119; lectures again in the East, with Boston as headquarters, 119; meets Billings, Nashby, and Howells, 119; becomes third owner and editor of the *Buffalo Express*, 119; his marriage to Olivia Langdon, 120; given a house in Buffalo by Mr. Langdon, 121, 122; his hard work as a journalist in Buffalo, 123; contracts for *Roughing It*, 124; sells *Buffalo Express* interest at a loss and leaves Buffalo for Quarry Farm, Elmira, 124; birth of his son Langdon and serious illness of Olivia Clemens, 124; death of Jervis Langdon, 123, 124; dissatisfied with *Roughing It*, visited and helped by Goodman, 125, 126; encouraged over *Roughing It*, makes great progress, 126; decides to lecture again, 126; lectures again in the East, profitably, 127; moves to Hartford, 126, 127; decides to be an author only, 127; associates with Boston group, 127; *Roughing It* published and a great success, 127, 128; birth of a daughter, Olivia Susan Clemens (*q. v.*) and death of his son, Langdon Clemens, 128; plans *Tom Sawyer* as a play, 129; sails for England to do a book on English life, 129; great reception in England, gives up idea of book on English life, 129-131; rise of his American reputation, 131; enjoys home life in Hartford, 131, 132; writes *The Gilded Age* with Charles Dudley Warner, 132, 133; builds a new house in Hartford, 134; sails on second trip to England, 134; besieged by notables in London, 134; his wife's illness in Edinburgh, Dr. John Brown (*q. v.*), 135; tremendous triumph of lecture in London, 135, 136; returns to America with family and then goes alone to London to lecture, 136; lectures again in America and decides once more to stop lecturing, 136, 137; at Quarry Farm working on *Tom Sawyer*, 137; buys out illegal production of *The Gilded*

Age and a version of his own put on with great success, 138; moves to the house in Hartford, the house described, 138, 139; his relation with his wife, 139, 140; a "walk" to Boston with Twichell, 141, 142; the "Old Times on the Mississippi" articles and their success, 142, 143; buys a typewriter and finally gives it to Howells, 143; finishes *Tom Sawyer*, 143; *Tom Sawyer* published with great success a year later, 144; his visits to Howells's home in Cambridge, 144, 145; his summers at Quarry Farm, 145; begins *Huckleberry Finn* at Quarry Farm, but puts it aside, 145, 150; writes an unsuccessful play, "Ah Sin," with Bret Harte, 146; begins *The Prince and the Pauper* (*q. v.*) but puts it aside, 146, 147, 150; an entertainer at home, "Emeline" and the cat, 149; proposes a joint lecture tour with Thomas Nast, but the latter declines, 148, 149; an inveterate and eccentric billiard player, 149, 150; sails for Germany, with his family and Bayard Taylor and Murat Halstead to do a book of travel, 150; at Heidelberg, writes Twichell to join him, 151; the tramp with Twichell through Germany and Switzerland, 151-153; his conduct on the tramp described by Twichell, 152, 153; writes part of *A Tramp Abroad* in Munich, 154; meets Darwin, 154; Paris, England, and home, to Quarry Farm, and Hartford, 154, 155; struggles with and finishes *A Tramp Abroad*, 154, 155; *A Tramp Abroad* published, 156; contributes to the *Atlantic Monthly*, 156; returns with pleasure to work on *The Prince and the Pauper*, 155, 156; fails to write his autobiography, 156; gets Orion Clemens to write his autobiography, which is not published, 156-158; makes Orion Clemens a steady allowance of money, 158; birth of a daughter, Jane Lampton Clemens (*q. v.*), 158; makes progress on *Huckleberry Finn*, 158, 159; his affection for cats and the dog, "Bones," 159; his enthusiasm for new inventions, 159, 160; introduces General Grant at a meeting in Hartford, 160, 161; his reckless and disastrous business enterprises, 162, 163; his letter to his mother about his business worries, 163; his refusal to support Bell and the new telephone, 162, 163; *The Prince and the Pauper* published by Osgood, 163, 164; returns to the Mississippi with Osgood, 164; a pilot once more, 164-166; with Bixby again, 166; finds the old romance of the Mississippi gone, 166,

Mark Twain—Cont.

167; becomes Osgood's partner in publishing, 167; desperate over *Life on the Mississippi*, 167; *Life on the Mississippi* published and a success, 168; the history game and its failure, 168, 169; finishes *Huckleberry Finn*, 170; collaborates with Howells on a new and unsuccessful play about "Colonel Sellers," 170, 171; the lecture tour with Cable, Howells, and Aldrich, 171, 172; visits Orion Clemens and his mother, 171, 172; stops the clocks at Thomas Nast's home in Morristown, 172; his children play *The Prince and the Pauper* for him, 172, 173; home theatricals in Hartford, 172, 173; publication and success of *Huckleberry Finn*, 174; a partner of Webster in Charles L. Webster & Co., 174; sees possibilities of Grant's *Memoirs* and gets them for Charles L. Webster & Co., 175-177; encourages General Grant in his work on his *Memoirs*, 177, 178; tremendous success of Grant's *Memoirs*, 177-179; death of General Grant and Mark Twain's estimate of him, 178, 179; the top wave of prosperity, 179, 180; described by Susy Clemens, 179, 180; happy days at Quarry Farm, 180.

1885-1896

Charles L. Webster & Co. in hard straits, 180, 181; works on *A Connecticut Yankee*, 182, 183; supports a typesetting machine, 182, 183; severe financial strain, 183; turns down a lecture offer, 183; introduces Nye and Riley in Boston and gets an ovation, 183; a free lecture, in place of Thomas Nelson Page, 183, 184; Master of Arts degree from Yale, later makes "reforms" there, 184, 185; visited by Rudyard Kipling, then unknown, 186, 187; Rudyard Kipling's opinion of, 187; *The Prince and the Pauper* dramatized and produced, 187, 188; William Gillette (*q. v.*) and Elsie Leslie (*q. v.*), 188; *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* finished, published, and doubtfully received, 188, 189; calls the *Connecticut Yankee* his "swan song," 189; financial strain makes him consider giving up Hartford home and moving to Europe, 189; death of his wife's mother, 189; death of his mother, 189; death of Charles L. Webster, 190; complete failure of the typesetting machine, his securities exhausted, 190; borrows money, starts novel on Sellers play written with Howells, contracts with the N. Y. Sun and McClure Syndicate

for European letters, and prepares to leave Hartford, 190; departure from Hartford, 190; wandering through Europe, 191-199; his comment on his own taste in art, 191; "out of place" at the Wagner festival at Bayreuth, 191; Germany, Switzerland, down the Rhone, 192; "The Lost Napoleon"—profile on a mountain, 192-194; gay winter in Berlin, entertained by the American minister W. W. Phelps, 194; has pneumonia, 194; makes a break at a dinner with Emperor William II, the Emperor's "apology," 195; in the south of France, and then Florence, 196; writes "All Sorts and Conditions of Ships" on shipboard, 196; brief business trip to America; difficulties of Webster & Co., the typesetting machine again, 196; back in Germany, at work on *Tom Sawyer Abroad* and *Those Extraordinary Twins*, 196; tramps with Twichell again, 197; meets the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, at Hamburg, Germany, 197; a public statement on his debts, 207; a triumphant tour—Australia, Ceylon, India, South Africa, England, 208, 209; arrival in Southampton, 209; the death of Susy Clemens, 210-212; the permanent effect of the death of Susy Clemens on him, 211.

1896-1905

In seclusion in London, 212, 213; writes *Following the Equator*, 212, 213; the report of his death, and his comment on it, 213; elected honorary life member of the Savage Club, London, 213, 214; in Switzerland, *In Memoriam*, 214; the death of Orion Clemens, 215; *Following the Equator* published, 215; all debts paid, 215, 216; feted in Vienna, 215; his exact relations with Rogers, 216, 217; the carpet pattern machine, 217; articles on the Austrian Reichsrath and on the Jews, 218; a lion in Vienna, 218; begins writing *Joan of Arc* (*q. v.*), 197-199; to America on business, a meeting with Howells, 199; his dream of his life, 200; to Florence and then back to America, 200; his attitude toward business, 200; Charles L. Webster & Co. heavily in debt, of which Mrs. Clemens pays part, 201; meets Mr. H. H. Rogers (*q. v.*), who helps him out of his business difficulties, 202; promises to leave business, 203; gorgeously entertained, called the "Belle of New York," 203; "Traveling with a Reformer," brings him a private car to Chicago with Rogers, 203, 204; Webster & Co. goes bankrupt, and Mark Twain plans to pay

Mark Twain—Cont.

his creditors back in full, 204, 205; the final failure of the typesetting machine, despite Rogers's help, 206, 206; in France with Mrs. Clemens at work on *Joan of Arc*, 205; at Pomroy's studio home in Paris, 205; his attitude toward inventors, 206; rapid progress on *Joan of Arc*, 206; starts on lecture tour around the world with his wife and daughter Clara, farewell to Susy, 207; a few weeks at Quarry Farm, 207; memories of Susy Clemens, 210, 220; "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" and "The Mysterious Stranger," 219 and footnote; the Boer War, his position on, 220; Sweden and London, 220; Dolls. Hill House, 220, 221; triumphant return to New York, 221; introduces Colonel Henry Watterson, at Carnegie Hall, 222; worn out by his honors, 222; as social satirist, 222-225; "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" and what came of it, 223-225; to Saranac Lake and then the new home at Riverdale-on-the-Hudson, 226; a successful attack on Richard Croker, 226; interested in politics, 227; the Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Missouri, 227-230; sees Horace Bixby again, 227; Hannibal and John Briggs again, a triumphant return, 228, 229; river pilot no longer, 230, 231; at York Harbor, Maine, near Howells, 232; illnesses of Mrs. Clemens and Jean, back to Riverdale, 232, 233; the *St. Nicholas* contest, 233, 234; Quarry Farm again, *A Dog's Tale*, 234; in Italy again, with Mrs. Clemens, Clara, Jean, and Katie Leary, 234-237; last illness and death of Mrs. Clemens, 234-237; his sorrow and remorse, 237; summer at Tyringham, Massachusetts, 238; 21 Fifth Avenue, New York, with the old furniture, 238; satirical writings, unpublished, and "War Prayer," 239; at Dublin, New Hampshire, 240; deaths of his friends, 240; *Eve's Diary* finished, and "3000 Years Among the Microbes—by a Microbe," 240.

1905-1910

The great seventieth birthday dinner, 240-242; his pleasure in his fame, 241; his remarks on being seventy years old, 242; meets Albert Bigelow Paine the night of the Founders' Night Address at the Players' Club, 1901, 243; lets Paine use his letters for *The Life of Thomas Nast*, 244; beginning of friendship with Paine at dinner in honor of his (Mark Twain's)

being elected honorary member of the Players' Club, 1906, 244-246; agrees to help Paine write his biography, mentions his autobiographical chapters, 247-249; his reading and writing in bed, 247 ff.; dictating memories of his life, 249-253 ff.; his smoking habits and tastes, 253; his "strained relations" with God, 253, 254; numerous speeches, his last regular lecture, the riot at the Y. M. C. A., 254; a lonely summer at Dublin, dictation continued, 255; his love for cats, 256; autobiographical chapters in the *North American Review*, 256; plans for the house at Redding, Connecticut, 256, 257; New York again, 257; his immense pleasure in billiards and manner of playing, 257-262 ff.; renews dictations, 258 ff.; seventy-first birthday alone with Paine, 261; his memories of old friends, 262; at Washington in "Uncle Joe" Cannon's office; preaching copyright to Congressmen, 262, 263; decides to wear white clothes only, 263; invites Paine to live with him, 263; his appearance in his later days, 263, 264; his heresies and philosophy, 264, 265; his three recurrent dreams, 265, 266; his passion for, and good memory of, history, 266; sails to receive the degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Oxford, a tremendous reception in England, 267, 268; the *Punch* dinner, the "cyclone" in the Sheldonian Theater, 268; back in New York, 269; "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven" published, 269; his view of the hereafter, 270; moves to the new house (first called "Innocence at Home," later, "Stormfield") at Redding, Connecticut, 271-274; his remarks on "The Great Law," 275; interest in Redding people and in the Redding Library, 275, 276; on books and morals, 276; shows signs of age, 276; the death of Rogers, a heavy blow, 276; trip to Baltimore, and warning illness, 277-279; Clara Clemens marries Ossip Gabrilowitsch and goes abroad, 280; worried over Jean Clemens, 280; his illness more severe, a visit to Bermuda, 280, 281; his seventy-fourth birthday, 281; back in America, met by Jean Clemens, 281; the death of Jean Clemens, 281-284; "I have never greatly envied any one but the dead," 282; "The Death of Jean," the end of his autobiography, and his last writing, 284; the last talk with Howells, 285; a winter in Bermuda, and his secret plan to come home, 285, 286; his last writing, advice to Paine on etiquette in Heaven

- Mark Twain—*Cont.*
 quoted, 287, 288; whistle greetings from the captain of the *Bermudian*, 288; a serious attack, 288; passage home, 289, 290; his courage, humor, and courtesy in his last illness, 289-293; his last days at "Stormfield," 293; his death, April 21, 1910, 292-294; his notes on death, 291; funeral at the Brick Church, New York, 294; the wreath woven by Mr. and Mrs. Dan Beard, 294; Howells's words on seeing his face for the last time, 295.
- Mark Twain—A Biography*, by A. B. Paine, 99 footnote, 182 footnote, 265 footnote.
- "Mark Twain," the name, how he got it, 54, 55; Mark Twain's first regular use of, 1863, 76.
- Mark Twain*, the harbor boat at St. Louis, the christening of, 230, 231.
- "Mark Twain house," built on Hill Street, Hannibal, in 1844, 15.
- "Mark Twain Ruhe," at Weggis, Switzerland, 214.
- Matthews, Brander, presides at the Players' Club dinner to celebrate the election of Mark Twain as an honorary member, 245.
- Memoirs of General Grant*, see Grant, General.
- Menken, Adah Isaacs, one of the writers in San Francisco in the '60's, 85.
- Métropole, the Hôtel, Vienna, thronged by notables pursuing Mark Twain, 218.
- Millais, Sir John, calls on Mark Twain in London, 134.
- Miller, Joaquin, one of the literary group in San Francisco in the '60's, 84.
- Miller, Mary, breaks Mark Twain's heart, 20.
- Miller, Frank, at the Players' Club dinner in honor of Mark Twain, 245.
- Moffet, Annie, daughter of Pamela Clemens Moffet (*q. v.*) attends Mark Twain's wedding with her mother, 120.
- Moffet, Pamela Clemens, see Clemens, Pamela.
- Moffet, Samuel, son of Pamela Clemens Moffet (*q. v.*) and William A. Moffet (*q. v.*), nephew and namesake of Mark Twain; Mark Twain brings him a steam-engine from England, 131.
- Moffet, William A., marries Pamela Clemens (*q. v.*), 30.
- Montgomery, pilot for whom Mark Twain once steered, becomes head of Confederate Mississippi Fleet, 57.
- Morning Call*, the San Francisco, Mark Twain a reporter on, 83, 84.
- Mulford, Prentice, one of the writers in San Francisco in the '60's, 85.
- Munro, David of the *North American Review*, tells Paine of Mark Twain's reading his *Life of Thomas Nast*, 244 ff.
- "My Lord He Calls Me," jubilee song, Mark Twain sings, 230.
- My Mark Twain*, by William Dean Howells, quoted, 142.
- "Mysterious Stranger, The," written in Vienna, 219 and footnote.

N

- Nansen, the explorer, with Henry M. Stanley, Mark Twain, and the Prince of Wales, honorary life member of the Savage Club, 214.
- Nasby, Petroleum V., (pen name of David R. Locke,) with Mark Twain in Boston, 119.
- Nast, Thomas, the cartoonist, meets Mark Twain at Cooper Union and proposes joint lecture tour, receives same offer from Mark Twain ten years later and declines it, 148, 149; visited by Mark Twain and George W. Cable at Morristown, 172; see *The Life of Thomas Nast*, by Albert Bigelow Paine.
- "Nook Farm," the literary neighborhood in Hartford where Mark Twain, the Warners, the Stowes, and others lived, 132.
- North American Review*, the, publishes Mark Twain's "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," (*q. v.*), 224, 225; Mark Twain's autobiographical chapters published in, 256.
- Notebook, Mark Twain's river, quoted, 56.
- Nye, Bill, introduced by Mark Twain when lecturing at Boston with Riley, 183.
- Nye, Miss Emma, friend of Olivia Clemens's, dies on a visit to home of Mark Twain, 124.

O

- "Old Times on the Mississippi," reminiscences conceived by Mark Twain during walk and talk with Twichell, 142; accepted by Howells for the *Atlantic Monthly*, 142; highly praised by John Hay, 143; reprinted in newspapers and pirated as a book in Canada, 143; see *also Life on the Mississippi*.
- Oliver, young lawyer, mining companion of Mark Twain, 65; becomes probate judge in Unionville, 60.
- Osgood, James R., of Boston, becomes a friend of Mark Twain and publishes *The Prince and the Pauper*, 163, 164; with Mark Twain on the return to the Mississippi, 164-166; Mark Twain

- becomes partner of, 167; Mark Twain's opinion of, 168; Mark Twain's trip to Chicago which results in "Traveling with a Reformer," which in turn results in a private car for Mark Twain and Rogers, 201.
- "Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands," Mark Twain's lecture, scores a tremendous triumph in London, 139.
- Oxford, the University of, gives Mark Twain the degree of Doctor of Letters, 267-268.
- P
- Page, Thomas Nelson, Mark Twain substitutes for, as a lecturer, 183, 184.
- Page, the inventor of a typesetting machine, supported by Mark Twain, has disastrous whimsies, 182; still promising about the typesetting machine, 190; Mark Twain meets again, Mark Twain's opinion of, 199; gets the Chicago *Times-Herald* to give the machine a trial, 203.
- Paine, Albert Bigelow, finds "The Lost Napoleon" (q. v.), 193; meets Mark Twain, 243; the beginning of his friendship with Mark Twain at dinner in honor of Mark Twain's being elected honorary member of the Players' Club, and the first idea of a biography by Paine, 1906, 244-246; meets Mrs. Clemens, 244; with Mark Twain, at Dublin, 255; buys land for Mark Twain's house at Redding, Connecticut, 256, 257; closer association with Mark Twain begins with billiards, 257 ff.; the trip to Washington with Mark Twain, 262, 263; moves to Mark Twain's house, 263; travels in the West to see Mark Twain's old friends, 268, 267; with Mark Twain in England, 267, 268; lives near "Stormfield," 271 ff.; follows the route of the Innocents, 276; with Mark Twain in Baltimore, 277; lives with Mark Twain at "Stormfield," 278 ff.; with Mark Twain in Bermuda, 280, 281; joins Mark Twain unexpectedly during his second visit to Bermuda, 286-288; brings Mark Twain home, 289, 290; with Mark Twain at the end, 291-295.
- Paine, Louise, daughter of Albert Bigelow Paine, visits Mark Twain at "Stormfield" when fourteen years old, 274.
- Pall Mall, in East Tennessee, journey of John and Jane Clemens from, 1.
- Paul Jones, the, Mark Twain's first river boat, 40.
- Pennsylvania, the, the fight on, 48-50; the disaster on, 52.
- Phelps, William Walter, American minister to Germany, shows attentions to Mark Twain in Berlin, 191.
- Phoenix, John, Mark Twain compared to, 97.
- Players' Club, the, Mark Twain addresses the Founder's Night dinner of, and meets Paine, 143; the dinner for Mark Twain, 245 ff.
- Pomroy, the artist, Mark Twain at his studio home in Paris, 205.
- Pond, Major, manager of the Mark Twain-George Cable expedition, gets Mark Twain to introduce Nye and Riley in Boston, 183; tries unsuccessfully to get Mark Twain to lecture, 183.
- Prince, the, in *The Prince and the Pauper*, played by Susy Clemens, 173.
- Prince and the Page, The*, by Charlotte M. Yonge, gives Mark Twain a start on *The Prince and the Pauper*, 146.
- Prince and the Pauper, The*, Mark Twain gets an idea for from *The Prince and the Page*, by Charlotte M. Yonge, 146; Mark Twain starts to write but puts aside, 147; the author's pleasure in and explanation of, 155; Mark Twain returns to work on, 155, 156; enjoyed and criticized by the author's family, 156; published by James R. Osgood (q. v.), 1881, 163; Olivia Clemens makes a play of, and the whole family plays in, 172, 173; dramatized by Abby Sage Richardson and produced by Daniel Frohman, with Elsie Leslie in the double lead, 187, 188.
- Prince of Wales, the, later King Edward VII, with Nansen, Stanley, and Mark Twain, honorary life member of the Savage Club—Mark Twain's comment on his necessary pleasure in that fact, 214; meets Mark Twain in Germany, 197.
- Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Mark Twain works on at Nauheim, Germany, in its original form called *Those Extraordinary Twins*, 197.
- Q
- Quaker City Holy Land Excursion*, the, Mark Twain sent on, by *Alta California*, 100, 101; notables on, 101; sails, June 8, 1867, 106; Mark Twain's particular friends on, and the originals of characters in *The Innocents Abroad*, 106; visited France, Italy, Greece, the Holy Land, 106; correctly recorded in *The Innocents Abroad*, 107; only sixty-seven passengers on, 107; Mark Twain's notebooks of the journey, 107, 108; arrives in New York, November 19, 1867, 108; Mark Twain's letters to *Alta*

- California* and *New York Tribune* on, 103, 109.
- Quarles, "Uncle" John, brother-in-law of Jane Clemens, writes enthusiastically to her of prospects in Missouri, 2; his home headquarters for Clemens children, 7; his character described, 7; his partnership with John Clemens dissolved, 81.
- Quarry Farm, near Elmira, New York, home of Olivia Clemens's sister, Mrs. Theodore Crane, Mark Twain and family move to, 124; Mark Twain's description of his study at, 137; Mark Twain does most of his writing at, 145; Mark Twain's affection for the cats and dog on, 159; Mark Twain's description of a Sunday at, 180; visited by Rudyard Kipling, 186, 187; *A Dog's Tale* Mark Twain's last writing there, 234.
- Queen of Roumania, Carmen Sylva, hero-worships Mark Twain in Vienna, 218.
- Quintard, Dr. Edward, physician to Mark Twain in his last illness, 278, 286, 293.
- R
- Rab and His Friends*, by Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, leads Mark Twain to the friendship of its author, 135.
- Ralls, Colonel, helps Mark Twain's "Company" in the Southern army, 59.
- Raymond, John T., acts successfully the part of "Colonel Sellers" in illegal dramatic version of *The Gilded Age* and later in Mark Twain's own version, 138; refuses to act in second "Colonel Sellers" play, his opinion of it, 170, 171.
- Reade, Charles, meets Mark Twain in London and asks him to collaborate on a novel, 134.
- Redding (Connecticut) Library, Mark Twain supports, 276; Mark Twain provides a building for, in memory of Jean Clemens, 287.
- Redpath, lecture manager for Mark Twain, 119; Mark Twain's instructions to, about churches, 126; Mark Twain refuses to lecture for, 131; Mark Twain's telegram to, refusing to lecture again, 137; Mark Twain wires to, on "walk" to Boston, 141.
- Reed, "Tom," Mark Twain argues politics with, 227.
- Reichsrath, the Austrian, Mark Twain witnesses and writes an article on the outbreak in, 218.
- Reid, Robert, at the Players' Club dinner in honor of Mark Twain, 245.
- Rice, rival reporter of Mark Twain's in Nevada, 75.
- Richardson, Abby Sage, dramatizes *The Prince and the Pauper*, 187.
- Richardson, Robert, his verses put on the gravestone of Susy Clemens, 212.
- Riley, James Whitcomb, introduced by Mark Twain while lecturing in Boston with Nye, 183.
- Rising, Mr., the Virginia City Clergyman, shocked by Mark Twain's profanity, 73.
- Robards, George, the Latin scholar, friend of Mark Twain in school, 20.
- Robards, John, friend of Mark Twain in school, 20.
- Robert Fulton Society, the, Mark Twain's farewell lecture for the benefit of, 254.
- Rochambeau, the Count and Countess, at the christening of the *Mark Twain*, 230.
- Rogers, cartoonist, pictures Mark Twain in *Harper's Weekly* as Tom Sawyer having the time of his life over the row started by "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (*q. v.*), 224.
- Rogers, H. H., meets Mark Twain, and begins to help him in business, 202; takes bankruptcy situation in hand, and saves Mark Twain his copyrights, 205; loses \$50,000 in attempt to put over the typesetting machine, 205, 206; Mark Twain's payments to, for his debt, 208; did not give or lend money to Mark Twain, but only priceless advice and help, 216, 217; fortunately puts a damper on the carpet-machine project, 217; Mark Twain and "Tom" Reed on a yachting trip with, 227; Mark Twain suggests as one of the guests of a small seventieth birthday dinner, 240; death of, a heavy blow to Mark Twain, 276.
- Rogers, Mrs. Henry, gives Mark Twain a billiard table, 257.
- Roughing It*, describes journey of Mark Twain and Orion Clemens into the West, 62; quoted on Lake Tahoe expedition, 64; Calvin H. Higbie, Mark Twain's mining companion, in, 66; tells, with elaboration, of near fortune in the "Wild West" mine, 68; passage in it about Mark Twain's idleness, poverty, and job-losing in San Francisco fiction, 83, 84; story of Dick Baker's cat in, taken from a story of James Gillis's about Dick Stoker, 88; Mark Twain's experiences in Hawaiian Islands recorded in, 93; contracted for, 124; Mark Twain dissatisfied with and helped by Goodman, 125, 126; Mark Twain, encouraged over, makes great progress on, 126; lectures from successful, 127; published and a great success, 127,

- 128; English copyright obtained, 129, 130; lecture from a vast success in London, 130.
- S
- Sackcloth and Ashes, Mark Twain's three cats at Dublin, 256.
- St. Nicholas magazine, the, the tribute of children to Mark Twain in the drawing contest in, 233, 234.
- San Francisco, the literary lights of, 84, 85.
- Saturday Evening Post, The, prints two anecdotes by Mark Twain, 20.
- Saturday Post, the, Keokuk, Mark Twain's letter to, 59.
- Saturday Press, the, New York, publishes "Jim Sanley and His Jumping Frog," 91.
- Savage Club, the, of London, elects Mark Twain honorary life member 213, 214.
- Scott, Sir Walter, Howells compares Mark Twain's clearing his debts to that of, 221.
- "Second Embassy" in Vienna, Mark Twain's, 219.
- Sellers, Captain, Isaiah, who signed himself "Mark Twain," whence Mark Twain got the idea, burlesqued and hurt by Mark Twain, 51, 55; dies, and Mark Twain adopts his pen name, 75.
- "Sellers, Colonel Mulberry," original was James Lampton, 2; in *The Gilded Age*, James Lampton the original of, 132, 133; his sayings, "There's Millions in it," a part of the language, 133; the central figure and making of the dramatic version of *The Gilded Age*, acted by John T. Raymond, 138; Mark Twain and Howells write a second and unsuccessful play about, 170, 171; play on, written in collaboration with Howells; Mark Twain starts to turn it into a novel, 190; Mark Twain compared to, by his wife, 203.
- Shaw, Henry W., true name of Josh Billings, (q. v.).
- Sheridan, General, his book published by Charles L. Webster, (q. v.), 181.
- Sherman, Lieutenant General, on *Quaker City* Excursion, 101.
- "Sid," in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Henry Clemens the original of, 17.
- "Sieur de Conte," in *Joan of Arc*, 198.
- Simmons, "Jack," Speaker of the Nevada House, and crony of Mark Twain in Carson City, 75.
- Sketches, New and Old, some of the papers Mark Twain wrote for the *Californian* were included in, 86.
- Slee, Mr., agent of Jervis Langdon in Buffalo, arranges for honeymoon of Mark Twain and his bride, 121.
- Slote, Ian, Mark Twain's room-mate on the *Quaker City* Holy Land Excursion, and the original of "Dan" in *The Innocents Abroad*, 106.
- Spaulding, Clara, girlhood friend of Olivia Clemens, sails on trip to England with Mark Twain and his wife and daughter, 134.
- Stanley, Henry M., the explorer, with Nansen, the Prince of Wales, and Mark Twain, honorary life member of the Savage Club, 214.
- Stanton, Theodore, started hunting Mark Twain's "Lost Napoleon," at his request, but unsuccessful because misdirected, 193.
- Stedman, Edmund Clarence co-editor of a Library of American Literature, which is unacceptably published by Charles L. Webster (q. v.), 181.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, his opinion of *Huckleberry Finn*, 145.
- Stewart, Senator, of Nevada, Mark Twain his secretary for a week, 109.
- Stoddard, Charles Warren, one of the writers in San Francisco in the '60's 85.
- Stoker, Dick, goes with James Gillis and Mark Twain to Angel's Camp, 88; friend of James Gillis, his appearance and exploits, 88.
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher, of Hartford, meets Mark Twain, 114; neighbor of Mark Twain in Hartford, 132.
- Sum, the New York, Mark Twain arranges with for a series of letters from Europe, 190.
- Sunday Mercury, the New York, Mark Twain contributes to, 80.
- "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," Mark Twain sings, 256.
- Szczepanik, the Austrian inventor, Mark Twain's project for his carpet weaving machine, 217.
- T
- Tahoe Lake, Mark Twain's trip to, 64.
- Taylor, Bayard, sails with Mark Twain and family on way to his post as minister to Germany, 150.
- "Tennessee land," purchase of, by John Clemens, 3; in *The Gilded Age*, 3; clung to by John Clemens in poverty, 8; spared by John Clemens's creditors as worthless, 14; John Clemens's faith in, at the time of his death, 23; an attempt by Orion Clemens to get something for it, 28.
- Territorial Enterprise, of Virginia City, Mark Twain contributes sketches on frontier life to, 68; its rise to power, 71; freedom on, 72; Mark

- Twain writes letters for it from San Francisco, 84; Mark Twain's letters to on the San Francisco police cause a libel suit, 86.
- Those Extraordinary Twins*, the original form of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (*q. v.*)
- "3,000 Years Among the Microbes—by a Microbe," Mark Twain's Gulliver, started in Dublin, New Hampshire, 240.
- Tillon, blacksmith, mining companion of Mark Twain, 65.
- Times-Herald*, the Chicago, gives the typesetting machine supported by Mark Twain its last trial, 205, 206.
- "To Mary in H——1," poem by Mark Twain, 29.
- "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," Mark Twain's article on social crimes in 1900, published in the *North American Review*, raises a storm, 223-225.
- "Tom Sawyer," Mark Twain cartooned as in *Harper's Weekly*, 224.
- Tom Sawyer Abroad*, Mark Twain works on, at Nauheim, Germany, 196.
- Tom Sawyer, the Adventures of*, the original of the setting of Hannibal, Missouri, 9; Jane Clemens (*q. v.*) the original of "Aunt Polly" in, 12; the originals of the home incidents in, 17; Henry Clemens the original of "Sid" in, 17; John Briggs the original of "Joe Harper" in, 17, 18; Tom Blankenship the original of "Huckleberry Finn" in, 17, 18; Laura Hawkins the original of "Becky Thatcher" in, 21; Pamela Clemens the original of "Cousin Mary" in, 24; planned as a play, 129; Mark Twain works on, at Quarry Farm, 137; finished, Mark Twain's comment on, 143; published in 1876 and a great success, 144; Howells's opinion of, 144; Mark Twain revisits the scene of, with John Briggs, the "Joe Harper" of, 228.
- Tramp Abroad*, A, the Jaybird and Acorn incident in, taken from a story of James Gillis's, 88; Mark Twain sails for Germany to do a book of travel requested by his publishers, 150; the tramp with Twichell, 151-153; written partly in Munich, 154; writing of continued at Quarry Farm, 154; Mark Twain's difficulties with, and opinion of, 154, 155; finished at Hartford and delivered to Bliss, 155; published, 156; Twichell sent a copy of, with letter of thanks, 156; some of the best humor of in the appendix, 156; Twichell the original of "Harris" in, 156.
- "Traveling with a Reformer," which grew out of Mark Twain's trip to Chicago with Osgood, brings him a private car for a trip with Rogers, 203, 204.
- Tribune*, the New York, Mark Twain a correspondent of on the *Quaker City* Excursion, 104, 105.
- True Delta*, in which Mark Twain first used that name, 1859, 55.
- "True Story Repeated Word for Word as I heard it, A," told to Mark Twain by "Aunt Cord" and written into story of that title printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 137, 138.
- Tudor, Edward, son of King Henry VIII, the original of the Prince in *The Prince and the Pauper*, 147.
- Tuolumne Hills, scene of Bret Harte's *Roaring Camp* and *Sandy Bar* Stories, Mark Twain taken to, 87.
- Turgenev, calls on Mark Twain in London, 134.
- Twelve Cæsars of Suetonius*, Mark Twain reads in his last illness, 232, 233.
- Twichell, Harmony, wife of the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell, present at Mark Twain's wedding, 120.
- Twichell, Rev. Joseph Hopkins, friend of Mark Twain, meets Mark Twain and introduces him to the literary group at Hartford, 114; assists at marriage of Mark Twain, 120; Mark Twain's happy days with, in Hartford, 137; "walks" to Boston from Hartford with Mark Twain, 141, 142; Mark Twain conceives idea of "Old Times on the Mississippi" in conversation with, 142; his pleasure on being invited to join Mark Twain on a walking tour in Germany, 151; his tramp with Mark Twain in Germany and Switzerland and his letters to his wife describing Mark Twain on the tramp, 151-153; Mark Twain blames himself for his behavior toward, 153; Mark Twain's letter to on *A Tramp Abroad*, 154; the original of "Harris" in *A Tramp Abroad*, 156; Mark Twain sends him a copy of *A Tramp Abroad* with a letter of thanks, 156; Mark Twain's letter to, about Jane Lampton Clemens, his daughter, 158; given a primitive fountain pen by Mark Twain, 160; on excursions again with Mark Twain in Germany, 197; describes the meeting of Mark Twain and the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, 197; meets Mrs. Clemens in New York to tell her of the death of Susy Clemens, 211; Mark Twain's letter to, on the Boer War, 220; Mark Twain's letter to, on Colonel Henry Watterson, 222; Mark Twain's letter "working his bile off," to, 239; Mark Twain suggests as one of the guests of a small seventieth birthday dinner, 240.

U

- Uncle Sam*, with Mark Twain as a passenger, the last boat through the war lines, 58.
Union, the Sacramento, Mark Twain scoops the *Hornet* disaster for, 93-95; Mark Twain writes on Hawaii for, 92-95.
Union, the Virginia City, Mark Twain's "duel" with the editor of, 82.
 University of Missouri, the, gives Mark Twain the degree of Doctor of Laws, 227-230.

V

- Van Nostrand, Jack, of New Jersey, on the *Quaker City* Holy Land Excursion, and the original of "Jack" in *The Innocents Abroad*, 106.
 Van Valkenburg, General, minister to Japan, meets Mark Twain in Honolulu, 93.
 Vereschagin, visits Mark Twain in Vienna, 218.
 Verson, Frau von, a relative of Mark Twain's and wife of a German general entertains Mark Twain and Emperor William II, 195.
 Very, Joseph, Mark Twain's guide on his trip down the Rhone, 192.
 Villa Quarto, in Florence, where Mrs. Clemens died, 235, 236.
 Villa Viviani, near Settignano, the home of Mark Twain and family in Florence, 196, 197.
 Virginia City, Nevada, Mark Twain in, 69-82.

W

- Warner, Charles Dudley, of Hartford, meets Mark Twain, 114; and his wife, neighbors of Mark Twain in Hartford, 132; collaborates with Mark Twain on *The Gilded Age*, 132, 133; Mark Twain's happy days with in Hartford, 137.
 Warner, Daisy, plays "Tom Canty" in home production of *The Prince and the Pauper*, 173.
 Warner, George, his home in Hartford used for family production of *The Prince and the Pauper*, 172, 173; shows Mark Twain a copy of *Plain Tales from the Hills* and the visitor to Quarry Farm is identified as Rudyard Kipling, 187; Susy Clemens's illness at the home of, 212.

- "War Prayer," sets forth Mark Twain's opinion of war and war praying, 239.
 Watterson, Colonel Henry, introduced by Mark Twain at Carnegie Hall, 222.
 Webb, Charles Henry, founder and editor of the *Californian*, 85.
 Webb, Charles Henry, puts Mark Twain's sketches in a book, *The Jumping Frog and Other Sketches*, and publishes it, 99-102; death of, 240.
 Webster, Charles L., nephew of Mark Twain by marriage, made Osgood's and Mark Twain's subscription manager in New York, 167; his success with *Life on the Mississippi*, 168; has a hand in the history game enterprise, 169; partner of Mark Twain in Charles L. Webster & Co., and successful publisher of *Huckleberry Finn*, 174; makes a tremendous success of Grant's *Memoirs*, 175-179; unsuccessful ventures and an embezzlement put the company in a bad way, 180, 181; loses his health and retires, 181; death of, 190; the company kept going by Mark Twain's borrowed money, 190; the company in a bad way, 196; Mr. Hall in charge of the company, 196; the company heavily in debt, partly relieved by Mrs. Clemens, 199-201; the company goes bankrupt, 204.
 Webster, Charles L. & Co., see Charles L. Webster.
 Wellington, the Duke of, his reward compared by Mark Twain with that of General Grant, 161.
 Whipple, Edwin, praises Mark Twain's work, 131.
 William II, Emperor of Germany, Mark Twain dines with, 195.
 Wright, William, known as "Dan de Quille," city editor of the *Territorial Enterprise*, 71.
 Wrightson & Co., printers, Cincinnati, Mark Twain works for, 39.

Y

- Yale College, gives Mark Twain the degree of Master of Arts, 184; Mark Twain institutes "reforms" in, 181, 185.
 Yonge, Charlotte M., author of *The Prince and the Page*, which gives Mark Twain a start on *The Prince and the Pauper*, 146.